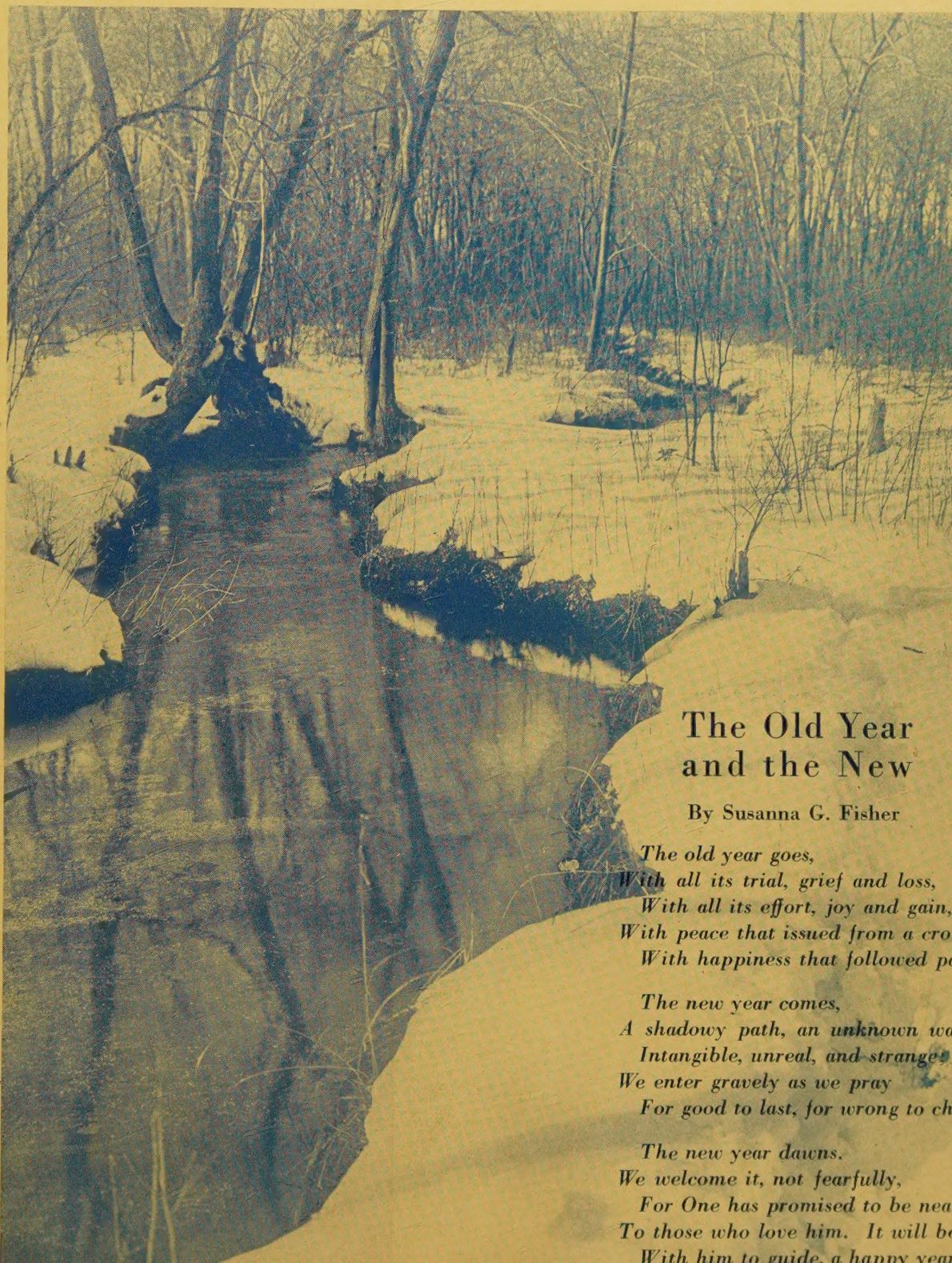


ADULT LEADER

A Journal of Christian Education and Church Work

JANUARY
1939
XV No. 1

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The Old Year and the New

By Susanna G. Fisher

*The old year goes,
With all its trial, grief and loss,
With all its effort, joy and gain,
With peace that issued from a cro
With happiness that followed po*

*The new year comes,
A shadowy path, an unknown wa
Intangible, unreal, and strange
We enter gravely as we pray
For good to last, for wrong to ch*

*The new year dawns.
We welcome it, not fearfully,
For One has promised to be nea
To those who love him. It will be
With him to guide, a happy year*

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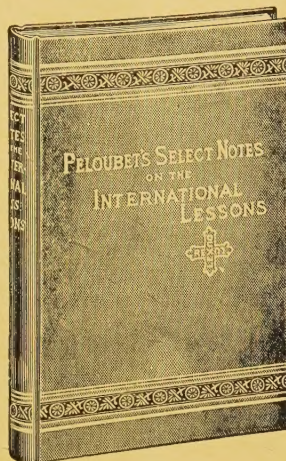
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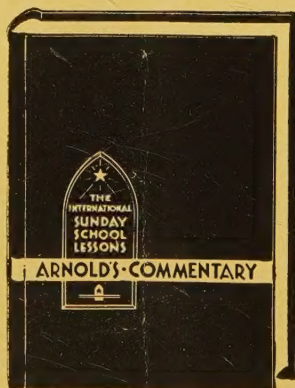


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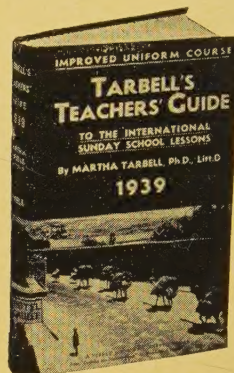


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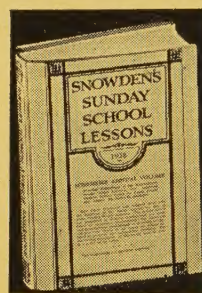
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Some Writers

IN THIS NUMBER

O. G. HERBRECHT is director of young people's work for the Iowa State Council of Christian Education. He is the author of *The Extension Division of the Church School*, and is a frequent contributor to ADULT LEADER. MERLE N. ENGLISH is general secretary of the Committee for China Relief. He was formerly connected with the Methodist Episcopal Board of Education; and is a member of the executive committee of the International Council of Religious Education. ARTHUR C. KRUER is a Baptist minister who devotes himself to writing and religious educational work. He is a member of the Compton Heights Baptist Church, St. Louis.

NEXT MONTH

A Business Man Studies Some Sunday School Problems" will be by RALPH N. MCENTIRE, a well-known manufacturer of Topeka, Kansas. Written in the question-and-answer form, it will present many interesting data gathered by Mr. McEntire. Evangelism in the church school is occupying much attention just now. As a contribution to the subject, SIDNEY W. POWELL tells of a "Forward Step Day" that was featured in his First Baptist Church, of Elgin, Ill. BASIL MILLER, professor of religion in Pasadena College, contributes some practical money-raising suggestions, "Finally, Mr. Superintendent, the Collection!" A seasonable article will be, "Fun on St. Patrick's Day."

Contents

	PAGE
Editorial	2
Special Articles	
Thirty-Nine Opens the Door. O. G. Herbrecht	4
Sunday Church School Attendance Can Be Increased. Merle N. English, D.D.	5
Profiting by Our Loss. Arthur C. Kruer	7
Peter Commended and Rebuked. John Snape, D.D.	8
Missionary Education in the Sunday School. Floy Lawrence Emhoff	11
Dramatizing the Easter Offering. Belle C. Morrill	12
Poetry	
Too Blind to See. W. Everett Henry	6
From the Director's Desk	
The Hazards of Alcohol	10
Humor	14
Recent Books	15
International Sunday School Lessons	
Jan. 1. Answering God's Call	16
8. The Place of Commendation and Rebuke	19
15. Peter Sees Christ's Glory	22
22. Peter Denies His Lord	25
29. Peter Declares His Love	28
A Worship Service Program	32

Editorial

Christ in the New Year

IN A LATER PARAGRAPH we refer to Christians as "followers of Christ." This implies that he is in front of us. It is to be remembered in this season, this January month. He is not back there in the past, in the year 1938, where our failures are, and our shame and regret; where we lived so unworthily; but on ahead, in the new time, the New Year. He cannot help us to scoop up the milk that has been spilled, to put back into the day the grace we robbed it of, to make straight the life that was crookedly lived; but what is far better, he can lead us on into a future of clean slate, of second chance, and of a new-birth redemption that he has worked out for us.

His New Year Greeting

WE MAY HEAR CHRIST JESUS SAYING: "Come on with me out of that low-vaulted past into the magnificent expanse of a new year's possibilities, opportunities and hopes. My following is a walk in newness of life and my service should be in newness of spirit!" He bids us, as he did those other disciples, to let the past be its own undertaker, bringing along with us only the past's living lessons. The apostle Paul declares, "I am stretching forward to the things which are before."

And Faith

WHAT THIS 1939 YEAR brings to us of real soul and life blessings will be largely conditioned and proportioned by the faith with which we are facing it. We have no right to stand on its threshold hesitant and doubting. If we confidently believe that it is going to be the best year of our life, the chances are that it will. The God of it will certainly bestow his gifts only into outstretched hands and open hearts.

Who Is a Christian?

"THE DISCIPLES WERE CALLED CHRISTIANS first in Antioch." Up to this time they seem usually to have been designated, "Those of the Way"—the way of Jesus. In enlisting men for his kingdom of God enterprise he had merely said to them, "Follow me!" No term is more frequently used in referring to Christians than "Followers of Christ." It is full of meaning, of connotation. *A Christian, then, is one who goes after Christ Jesus, in his way.*

The Way of Jesus

IT IS A MYSTICAL COMPANIONSHIP with Jesus, who has now become the follower's Lord and Master; and a companionship that gives him the assurance that he has been freed from the curse of humanity's sinfulness; the assurance, too, of enduring life with the Christ whose life is endless. It is a holy way, demanding righteousness. It is a way filled with Kingdom service. It is the way of a cross; and not a symbolical cross, but one that was blood-stained. Faith plays an indispensable part in this following; faith that the Leader is divinely directed and competent; which means that he is the Son of God, and still leading and saving, as an abiding Presence, the Holy Spirit.

Who Is a Baptist?

THE SAME REQUEST, for a brief definition of "a Christian," asked also for a definition of "a Baptist." *A Baptist is a member of a Baptist church.* When you go beyond this single specification you get into trouble with your defining. Almost any Baptist church stands for certain theological doctrines and ecclesiastical practices, historically inherent in the sect, yet few Baptist churches consistently stand for all and the same doctrines and practices; while Christian bodies not known as Baptist profess wholly or in part all the tenets historically regarded as Baptist. The matter is further complicated by the fact that there is no body or official with authority to formulate Baptist principles. The word itself, Baptist, must inevitably loom large in our denominational horizon just as the individual local Baptist church does in our system.

Quondam Baptists

IT WOULD SEEM LOGICAL that when a person ceases to belong to a Baptist church he ceases to be a Baptist, just as a man separates himself from a political party when he no longer votes with it or supports it. Yet we would not deny such persons the right to use the appellation Baptist in a certain sentimental sense (in compiling statistics we are sometimes glad to count them in!). I was sent for to visit a dying man in the Troy, New York, almshouse. He had said that he was a Baptist. I wondered, he gave so many evidences of having lived a dissolute life. It seemed that as a small boy he had attended for a little while

the Baptist Sunday school in Hoosick Falls. Such allegiance is touching, and illuminating. On the other hand, many a pastor becomes exasperated when he finds these sentimental Baptists in his parish, people who hold to the name but never visit his or any other Baptist church. And in looking over the biographies in *Who's Who* you wonder with what right some of these folks give "Baptist" as their denomination.

And What Is a Baptist Church?

NOT ANY CHURCH that takes the name and claims to be such, assuredly. We would ask a considerable number of Baptist churches in all fairness to surrender the designation; for there is a Baptist denomination, and they are not in it. The Baptists constitute a denomination; it has several divisions, located in different countries; but still it possesses organization, with the machinery of organization; and the one thing that makes a church actually a Baptist church is membership in one of the denominational branches. The laws and courts of the various states recognize this principle and deny the right legally to use the name Baptist to seceding churches and ministers. Accordingly, as we have defined a Baptist as "a member of a Baptist church," so we would say that *a Baptist church is simply a church belonging to the Baptist denomination.*"

Disrespectful Prayer

IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED that the most devout prayer is informal; "just a little talk with God." However true this is we may never forget that in prayer it is God we are talking with; and he certainly deserves our utmost courtesy—and some prayers don't give it to him. The prayer Psalms are prayed in intimately personal terms, yet they are always set in the largest adoration, addressed to a God "in his holy temple."

Is It Right to Study Prayer?

GEORGE ALBERT COE wanted some of my deacons to answer one of his questionnaires on prayer. I couldn't persuade them to do it. They argued that prayer is too sacred a thing to study or criticise. But such a view is responsible for not a little of the careless, slovenly praying that one hears—and prays. Prayer is worship, and should we not "worship God in the beauty of holiness"? I do not like to hear a young man overindulge in slang when conversing with his father. Notice that the reverential "thee," "thou," and the second person of the verb make for devout praying. Familiarity doesn't always breed contempt, but over-familiarity does.

The Cultivation of Prayer

A YOUNG PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER stirred and inspired his congregations mightily with his public prayers. He told me how he acquired the gift: "I was an easy speaker, eloquent, folks said. My pulpit prayers in those youthful years were not only too long, but after a while I began to wonder if they were not also vague, wandering, if I really said anything that God cared to hear. I hired a young lady in the church, an expert stenographer, to take down some of these 'long prayers,' and then send them to me typed. Reading them, in cold typing, made me ashamed of myself, before God."

A Superintendent's Prayer

THE OTHER SUNDAY I heard a superintendent make the worship service prayer before his school. I thought to myself how fortunate the young people of that school are to learn from hearing that man pray how to address God. The Pharisee in the temple must have rattled off a lot more nonsense than Jesus reports; we don't know what the publican's words were in the original Aramaic, but I think they were as clear and chaste an utterance as they are in the Greek, "*O Theos, hilastheti moi, to hamartolo!*" or in our English, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" When the Master said, "after this manner therefore pray ye," he gave a pattern that is incomparably phrased, that in few words sweeps man's whole life, physical and spiritual, into a devout asking.

"And When Thou Hast Shut the Door"

THE CRITICISM OF CLOSET PRAYER is a still more delicate matter. Yet shouldn't we study to make our private praying more worshipful, more effective, more worthy of the heavenly Father we are addressing, and more honestly confession, thanksgiving and petition? Prayer is in any case an awful act—in the best sense of that word. How shameful then to mumble our prayers, or say them when we are too sleepy to realize what we are saying. In conversation or writing we seek the fitting word; shouldn't we take as much pains in our talk with God?

Our Lord's Private Prayer

GEORGE WALTER FISKE (in *A Study of Jesus' Own Religion*) has this to say of it: "So sacred an experience was communion with his heavenly Father, his own praying was mostly in secret. But his companions had not watched him long before they discovered that the chief secret of his power was his prayer life. He would slip away quietly, for hours at a time, to some quiet spot on a neighboring mountain where he could escape from the world and find God."

Thirty-Nine Opens the Door

By O. G. Herbrecht, Des Moines, Iowa

THERE are two ways to get into a house: normally, through the door—with permission and with a welcome—and through a window without permission and certainly without a welcome. Through the door we are pretty sure of a welcome because we come to give of ourselves. Through the window we are certainly unwelcome because we come to take from others. Jesus called it to our attention when he said, "I am the door. . . By me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and find pasture. . . He that entereth not by the door . . . but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber!" (John 10: 9, 1.)

All of us who live to "see the Old Year out and the New Year in," are entering the House of '39, the New Year House, whether we are worthy or unworthy, givers or takers. They who are unworthy will plunder and burglarize the New Year, just as they have always robbed the years, seeking only what they can "get out of" life. They who are worthy will find the New Year waiting for them with great gladness and an open door. Who now are the worthy ones to whom the House of '39 will so gladly open its doors?

I. *Those who come on an honest quest of new Kingdom adventures.* "I'm tired of pacing the petty ring of the things I already know," sings Kathryn Douglas; "I want to stand on the daylight's edge and see where the sunsets go!" There is the tang of adventure in that verse. Surely there is something fine and sterling about Christian folks who are unsatisfied with what they have achieved and seek for opportunities to do more and better spiritual adventures they have never had! There are so many of these!

1. For instance, the adventure of seeking the best selfhood. Few of us have ever explored the "farthest out" of our potential circumference. God has put into every life some extraordinary loveliness, some quan-

tity of high goodness that will shine, if it is ever given a chance. Practically all of us live with unjustifiable content at much less than our moral and spiritual limit. What an adventure it would be to use these twelve months for exploring our spiritual boundaries—and to settle there! The stirring words of Tennyson's "Ulysses" dare us to do just that:

My purpose holds to sail these western seas until I die—
It may be that the gulfs will wash me down,
It may be I shall reach the happy isles . . .
To strive, to seek, perchance to find,
But not to yield!

2. Have you by chance ever experimented with the adventure of *looking back on the way you have come, to see the greatness of it you missed as you came?* The House of '38 may have looked quite drear and shabby as we lived in it—and every room seemed to have been labeled "Trouble." It appeared to us a House of Hurts—life is that way sometimes. And then so often we can only see the real greatness it did have as we look back upon it.

Gilbert K. Chesterton, in *The Man Who Was Chesterton*, relates how one day a friend found him at his apartment in Battersea, London, all packed for a journey.

"Where are you going?" the friend asked.

"To Battersea," replied Chesterton.

"But this," suggested the friend, "is Battersea."

Then Chesterton explained, patiently, "I cannot see Battersea here; I cannot see any London or any England; I cannot see that door—that chair—because the cloud of custom has come across my eyes. The only way to get back to them is to go somewhere else. . . The whole object of travel is not to set foot on a foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country."

The House of '39 says, "Come in—get away from '38—look back at it. You say '38 was hard? You

have missed its beauties! A cloud of custom has blurred your eyes. Come with me into the new country of Time, and see how really great '38 has been!"

3. A new adventure? Here is another: *Undertake in '39 the spiritual task of which thus far you have been afraid!* Have you said during '38, "I cannot do that. I simply cannot pray in public. I cannot talk to anyone about salvation. I cannot get up and lead a meeting. I cannot. I cannot?" But we do not grow spiritually without occasionally trying some new thing. Certainly one of the best ways of growing is to rid oneself of the "I can't" idea by plunging with a whole-hearted, faith-filled recklessness into that which thus far we have feared to try.

II. The House of '39 opens its doors also to those who really want to share themselves helpfully into the world about them.

We who are adults have come through many years, some of us may be three score and ten of them. It is inevitable that we should have come into some valuable possessions—caught if not earned from our passage through the years—that to unborn generations may bring what they most need. Many of the requirements for Tomorrow are not in that Tomorrow but in Yesterday! What shall we do with these equipments? Have they made us proud, so that we climb "into the scorner's seat and hurl the cynic's ban," or have they made us humbly grateful and joyously eager to "live in the house by the side of the road where the race of men goes by," willing to help them with what the fleeting years have given us? A great preacher said some time ago, "God does not fight for us, he fights with us. Whatever pains us, pains him." If that is true, how God must hurt sometimes! Why has he shared his divine equipments to help his created children carry their load? It is good to know that someone shares your load, isn't it?

Maybe the years have given you, in human measure, this ability to share the load of worry, grief and pain with others on the way.

The House of '39 is so very eager to welcome those who say, "Here I am, New Year! All worthy things that the old years have given me I bring along. Put me to work, somewhere, on the walls and in the rooms of your house, that to those in need I may share what I have. My Lord has said, 'He that is greatest among you shall be servant of all!' And so I want to be a servant in your house, oh Year of '39!"

III. And the House of '39 opens wide its door to those who seek earnestly to make amends for their mistakes.

None of us have ever gone through a single year without some serious mistakes. They have hurt us, and have hurt others, deeply. To those others we tried to say, "I'm sorry!" But is it not true that just "I'm sorry" does not help much? A murderer cannot bring back life by saying "I'm sorry." No apology, no matter how sincere,

can quite take away the sting a thoughtless word gave. So many of the big wrongs in life cannot be righted by "sorry."

The way of Zacchæus is much better. When he became convinced of his mistakes—over the stretch of many years—he did not say to the Master, "I'm sorry"; he said "I will restore!" Suppose we undertake in '39, to restore—to make amends for our mistakes of '38. To every one whom we have wittingly or unwittingly hurt, let us do something so fine and so beautiful that the hurt will be wiped out. "Forgetting the things that are behind" does not mean forgetting to make good the wrongs done in that past. "Pressing on toward the goal" must include the effort to restore.

"Time heals," it is said, and so it does—many things. But does it restore? Does it make amends for us? I have a friend who years ago lacerated his hand badly. Time healed it—but he has no use of that part of the hand. It is there—but useless. The man with the withered hand came to Jesus. Jesus did not

"heal"—he restored. It is good to ask ourselves about those whom we have wronged whether we can leave it to "time" to heal or whether we should endeavor to restore.

During the years we not only err, but we lose. Have you lost anything in '38—friends, work, faith, hope, love—any of those big things that mean so much to life? The New Year offers a chance to try to find again anything we have lost. The most thrilling sentence in all Scripture for those who have erred and lost is that which Jesus uses in the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin—"until he find it." The shepherd refused to give up the lost sheep; he searched until he found it. The woman refused to give up her lost coin; she searched until she found it. "Until found" should be one of our resolutions.

Suppose we come to the House of '39 with that spirit. Louise Fletcher Tarkington has written a beautiful poem "The Land of Beginning Again." The House of '39 opens wide its doors to those who with indomitable courage come to seek "until they find."

Sunday Church School Attendance Can Be Increased¹

By Merle N. English, D.D.

Secretary, Division of Religious Education in the Local Church,
Methodist Episcopal Board of Education

FROM some talk about the decrease in enrolment and attendance in Sunday church schools in the United States one would think that they are on the toboggan. When organizations start downward, some people are ready to help them on their way and are wholesale in their condemnation. Facts do not justify such a conclusion with reference to the church school.

Many schools have closed, others have lost in numbers, and many denominations are deep in the red,

but the other side of the story is that thousands of schools are showing marked increase in enrolment and attendance.

This is the answer to the question implied in the heading of this article. We know that Sunday church school attendance can be increased because increases are taking place.

A THREE-POINT PROGRAM

1. *Hold those you have.* This can be done by careful attention to the follow-up of all absentees. An alert enrolment committee with a superintendent or secretary who will check each week on absentees and see that they are called upon by the teacher, members of the class, or the pastor, has been

known to lift the attendance as much as 25 to 40 percent in a few weeks' time. People like to know they are missed. They respond to attention. There is no substitute for the personal interest of the teacher in each pupil. If we could prevent the losses that occur because of neglect, we would find most of the church school buildings unable to contain the numbers attending.

2. *Enlist new persons.* A careful survey of the people of the community will reveal multitudes who should be in the Sunday school. Many of these will be found in the church homes—children, young people, and adult, and others in the non-churched homes. Communities where people are

¹ This article is one in a series on the general theme "Extending the Outreach of Christian Education." The Protestant forces of the United States and Canada are giving especial emphasis this year to this matter of extending and increasing Sunday school attendance and other phases of Christian education. These articles are made available through the International Council of Religious Education.

moving in every week should produce new prospects. A welcome from the church will be greatly appreciated.

Careful attention should be given to those who have dropped out and ascertain why they ceased to attend. In many cases it will be found this was due to conditions which can be remedied easily. More often than not it will be because the habit was broken by absence from home, by illness, by circumstances which no longer affect or hinder attendance, or by the irregularity or inefficiency of a teacher. A careful cultivation of the homes is all important. This will establish friendly relationships resulting in the happy situation described by one superintendent, "We have excellent home cooperation. Our parents want the children to attend." Newspaper publicity emphasizing the importance of church school attendance and telling of the attractive features of your school will create interest. Cooperative effort enlisting all the churches and organizations will make possible the type of community survey and mass appeal that no single church can achieve.

3. *Improve the program of the school to make the increases permanent.* Many schools do not have increases and others that do have them do not hold them because the schools do not seem worthwhile. Many church schools have not moved forward as have public schools and other community agencies. To be successful a church school must meet personal needs, maintain meaningful services of worship, use modern methods, provide pupils and teachers with the best materials, and have buildings and equipment that are attractive and adequate. Schools which stress vital religion and its meaning for life today, cultivate personal experience, exalt Christ, the Bible, the home, and the church are growing both in numbers and power.

The teaching staff is all important. The best and only the best people in the community should be used. Such people will respond if the program is one worthy of their efforts. Every church should main-

tain a program for the enlistment, the improvement, and the training of its teachers. A recent study reveals that item one in the reasons given for increases in a large number of schools was, "Better trained teachers." Item one in the list of schools showing decreases was

TOO BLIND TO SEE

By W. Everett Henry, McMinnville,
Oregon

*All through the years I've been
too blind to see*

*What God has meant to be the
best for me,*

*And so have missed complete,
abundant life.*

*Life has been good, his blessings
have been rife,*

*But always, just to left or right,
has lain*

*The best that would have been my
utmost gain.*

*I need to ask forgiveness of my
Lord,*

*That I have been to him so poor
a ward;*

*Have learned so slowly how to
leave to him*

*The final word when vision has
been dim;*

*Have yielded so reluctantly my
heart,*

*When glad submission held the
better part.*

*And knowing that I've lived below
my best,*

*I needs must ask forgiveness of
the rest*

*Of men who know, or may yet
know of me;*

*For I have made it hard for them
to be*

*Their best, and pass to others help
they need,*

*To find in Christ's blest will their
best indeed.*

"Lack of sufficient number of qualified teachers."

Stand off and look at your school. Ask yourself what is there in your school that will make it worth the while of a boy or girl, young man or woman, or an adult to attend. Visit other schools and see what they are doing that you don't, that might help yours.

A Local Problem

This, like most of the other problems of the church, is a local problem. The reasons assigned for decline in attendance are many. Some of these may be valid, but they should not be used as an alibi. Most of them can be overcome. The scores and hundreds of "unreached" all around us are evidence of the fact that the people are a hand. If there is an earnest desire to bring them in, many will respond.

Plans, materials, devices of various kinds suggested by overheard organizations like denominational boards, state councils of religious education, state councils of churches, etc., have their value, but only as aids to local initiative and devotion. Long range operation will not get results. These come only through local hand to hand effort. One person thoroughly committed to the upbuilding of Sunday school who will make his or her business to contact one person a day will have the joy of witnessing a week by week increase in the attendance of persons who otherwise would not attend. Multiply this by two, by ten, by twenty, etc., and what a result will be achieved! Recently a pastor and the Sunday school superintendent of a small Wisconsin city attended a meeting where this subject was under discussion. They went home determined to do something about it and they did. Within a few weeks that Sunday school had increased its average attendance by fifty, of whom thirty were new members.

The motives to which the appeal is made are all important. If numbers are the only object, they can be secured by various types of contests, rewards, etc. However, increases by such methods are seldom permanent and frequently the results are harmful. The motive used and thereby strengthened are the very ones Christian education should supplant with higher motives. The emphasis should not be on numbers for the sake of numbers but upon persons and the service which in Christ's name can

(Concluded on page 13)

Profiting by Our Loss

By Arthur C. Kruer, St. Louis, Missouri

THERE is something in the human make-up that revolts when we are reminded that we have fallen short, or have suffered loss and defeat. Yet some of the most important movements of progress in history have developed out of situations presenting ominous or unfavorable prospects.

The forest conservation movement, for example, is the romantic outgrowth of far-sighted men's apprehension that unless the trees which were rapidly being cut down were replaced, there would some day, not far off, be a scarcity of timber in America. Much of the world's progress, in fact, can be traced directly to impending peril or other adverse circumstances.

During the past year Northern Baptists have sustained very considerable losses. This, however, need not occasion undue alarm or discouragement, provided its contemplation spurs the church forces to renewed earnestness and effort—that before the expiration of another year this loss may be turned into a gain. This can be accomplished easily, through something stronger than volition.

FACING THE FACTS

The loss to which reference is made is no slight one; it represents a setback for one of the most important of our church organizations. During the year just ended Northern Baptists have sustained a loss of slightly more than 79,300 in church school enrolment. The first time I saw this figure I was hopeful that there might be a mistake in somebody's mathematics; unfortunately this was not the case. Regardless of how many we have remaining on our rolls, this revelation is too challenging to be ignored or passed over lightly.

Seek by all means to remove this from the realm of cold statistics. It signifies the withdrawal of nearly eighty thousand living souls from our midst and influence—and that

from Northern Baptist ranks alone. A number of these individuals, it is true, have been claimed in death; but this is far short of the full explanation. A few have undoubtedly turned to other faiths, of one character or another; propriety (if not wisdom, in some of these instances) forbids the expression of too much regret over their departure. Still it is to be feared that the vast majority have been lost through indifference and the pressing-in of conflicting worldly interests. In other words, they represent a real loss to the cause of Christ and the kingdom of God—not to mention their own personal loss.

ANALYZING THE SITUATION

They're gone; therefore why not forget about them and go on? The spirit and zeal inspired by Christ does not permit the earnest Christian to assume such an attitude. As has been pointed out, these are living souls; and not only that, but what is to prevent our losing an equal number of living personalities next year, the year after, and so on? The case deserves a greater degree of consideration.

In the first place, then, at what point or points have our losses occurred? All departments, we are told, have suffered in this respect; whether all have suffered exactly alike statistics now available do not reveal. It will be the problem of each local school to make its own study to determine this.

One fact is quite outstanding: there is in too many of our church services and schools a noticeable scarcity of young people. If this condition is not embraced in those 79,300, it represents a serious additional misfortune. It signifies two vital things: these young people who are not being reached are passing through one of the most important and critical periods of their lives, in which they are finding their places in this social order and

forming habits likely to be retained throughout life; and further, the future personnel and leadership of our churches is being curtailed seriously, for who will take the places left vacant by those now active who must some day yield to their younger brethren and sisters? Remember; leaders are not as a general rule found; they are developed.

This vital fact has been brought out in connection with this curtailed enrolment; there are hundreds of thousands fewer children now than there were formerly. We are bound to notice this decrease in population for a long time to come; it means that there are going to be fewer young people and adults in the decades just ahead. This will inevitably affect our church schools to a considerable degree. But coupled with this, is the fact that we are at present touching only about one-third of our total possibilities. It has been estimated that sixty-three percent of (so-called) Protestant youth are not being reached; in that same column are the more startling statistics, seventy-eight percent of the Catholic youth and ninety-five percent of the Jewish youth are not being reached. This widens our field of possibilities tremendously; although it is not exactly ethical to proselyte, surely someone should be seeking to contact this vast host of young people.

We have therefore a threefold problem: holding those whom we still have; endeavoring to regain those who have slipped away; and reaching out after those as yet untouched.

FIXING THE RESPONSIBILITY

If anything definite is to be accomplished, either in stemming the ebbing tide of enrolment, or in replenishing it, the task is going to have to be undertaken by particular individuals, and groups. What is everybody's business, you will readily recall, is generally no-

body's; it is, as a matter of fact, sufficiently difficult to induce the average person to do his own specific work, without expecting him to seek out unassigned tasks.

Where we discover the greatest "leakage" in enrolment, there we are of necessity bound to focus responsibility. Let's not call it blame; that isn't the proper term; in many instances leaders are sincerely doing their best, do not know how to do better, but would welcome constructive counsel if wisely and tactfully advanced.

Since, then, the greatest falling-off seems to be in our young people's department (and perhaps the senior), naturally the responsibility will rest with the leadership of this division, and ultimately, if not entirely, with the class teachers. The supervisors can and certainly should direct and lead out, but the teachers will never see their part of the work accomplished until they are willing to accept it. Their task will also be to hold their pupils over this dangerous period; if they

can do this, the probability is that these young people will remain with the church permanently.

CHARTING THE COURSE

If it is of advantage to fix the responsibility upon particular individuals, it is of equal importance to determine definitely how the task is to be undertaken. Many noble and sincere intentions soon cool or go on the rocks simply for the want of specific, planned expression. To leave the matter at this point, therefore, would be of little value, unless someone caught a vision of what must be done.

Unfortunately, however, it is impossible to do more than sketch with a few bold strokes at this writing a suggested course of procedure, thus paving the way for further study of the problem.

Before attempting to reach out for that untouched host, it would be well to ascertain more accurately just where, in the local situation, our leakage is occurring, and what is the reason. It is of little value

to invite people in, only to watch them slip out as have tens of thousands of others. This, then, is our first consideration.

When we are ready to go forth after the unreached, we will find a number of possible plans for contacting them. The religious census is effective, especially in small communities; in this plan we can cooperate with the rest of the church school to great advantage (and why not?). If we canvass our present enrolment we will be able to secure the names of prospects enough to keep us busy for some time. Then there is what might be called the "Block Plan," which briefly means that an individual assumes responsibility for the block or district in which he lives, and works that with a view to finding prospects. Any of these plans, if thoroughly studied and executed, will yield gratifying returns.

Without great difficulty we could blot out this figure, 79,300, or even better, transfer it to the other side of our ledger.

Peter Commended and Rebuked

By John Snape, D.D., Los Angeles, California

TWICE only does Jesus use the word "Church" while here on the earth. Once in the sense of a "local body of believers in Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith in him and associated for worship, work and discipline" and once in the catholic sense of the term as he used it in commending Peter in the words "thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!"

Cæsarea Philippi was at the northern end of Palestine, 1150 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. Towering above it, giant like in majesty and crowned with snow was Mount Hermon, 8000 feet higher still. To the east stood a precipitous rock a thousand feet above the town, crowned by a strong fortress. It may have been that the light of this rock led Jesus to use the phrase "on this rock I

will build my church." Herod the Great had built near-by a temple of white marble in honor of Augustus Cæsar, and Philip the tetrarch had enlarged the town and called it Cæsarea in honor of Tiberius Cæsar and in order to differentiate it from the great seaport of Cæsarea it was called Cæsarea-Philippi, the Cæsarea of Philip. The transfiguration scene was only six days in the future. Fitting was it that the confession of Peter should fall upon the Master's ears just before a diviner voice should have pierced the mountain air with the corroborative confession, "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

"Who is he?"—that's the question everybody is asking from the moment of his baptism until the moment of his death. He is acquainted with the opinions men held concerning him. He knows he has not

been accepted by the nation. Four opinions were held about him—(1) that he was John the Baptist, (2) that he was Elijah, (3) that he was Jeremiah—a second Jeremiah, denouncing woes on Israel and calling the nation to tardy repentance, (4) or at least one of the prophets.

But the opinions of other men will not suffice for a personal opinion of Jesus, and he presses now for a conclusion. With self-restraint, with mixed emotion, with a voice like the sob of a soul, he asks "But ye, who say ye that I am?" And Peter, Peter the irrepressible, the impetuous, the quick-spoken, answered, "thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." And Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, and I say also unto thee that thou art Peter (a rock) and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of

hell shall not prevail against it."

By Christ's use of the word "church" he did not mean the continuation of any Jewish institution. We do not go back to Abraham for the church. All the terms of the new organization are Greek words—baptize, apostle, communion, bishop, disciple. The Greek word for church (ecclesia) means a "called out" body. It means the assembly of citizens in a self-governed state. It was essentially a democratic body, regenerated and sanctified by the truth, and knowing neither birth, social standing, culture or position. It will not be dissolved by death and will be presented at the last without spot or blemish.

Its illustrations in the New Testament are "the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the temple of Christ, the representative of Christ, the mystery of Christ." What is meant by the "rock"? Men say three things about it (1) that it was Peter himself. But he who holds this opinion must show that Peter alone was the founder of Christianity, but Ephesians 2:20 speaks of the "foundation of the apostles and prophets," must show that this power of Peter could be transmissible, how a foundation stone could exchange places with another stone, (2) that the rock was Christ himself, but this is unnatural. A builder must always be separate from the material he uses. A rock cannot build itself, (3) the rock was Peter's revelation and confession. He said "thou art Peter (a rock) and upon this rock (this bed-rock, this mass) I will build my church, and the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it."

The kingdom of heaven is not heaven and all the jokes we indulge about Peter with the keys at the pearly gates are only jokes, and perpetuate the Papistic theory of the Petrine authority.

Suppose we admit that the authority was given to Peter, as the representative of the apostolic group, to open the door. Then this can only mean that Peter opened the door of faith to the Jews at Pentecost, and to the Gentiles through Cornelius. This power of Peter is

soon seen to reside not in any man, but in the church (John 20:23) and any man who declares the way so clearly as to induce men to accept it, has the keys.

There will come a time when the church will continue beyond the grave—the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it. There will come a time when there will never be a lodge or a social club, or a philanthropic institution unfounded on the principles of the church of Christ, but there will never come a time when there will not be a church, for when he comes again he is to receive the church without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing.

Persecution and criticism cannot affect it. Infidelity and unbelief cannot permanently harm it. The gates were the place of attack and defense, but the gates of the grave cannot prevail against it.

Sostratis built a light-house—the pharos of Alexandria and the king commanded him to carve his name (the king's name) at the base of it. The architect was obedient to the king's command. He carved the king's name in plaster at the base of the lighthouse, but cut his own name (Sostratis) in the granite beneath. When the storms came and beat against the lighthouse they washed away the plaster and with it the king's name, but the heaviest waves could not affect the name of Sostratis. The waves of time and death will wash away the titles of human organizations, but deep in the granite of the enduring principles expressed in the confession of Peter—"thou art the Christ, the son of the living God" will be found the name of the church the one catholic church.

The commendation of Christ is immediately followed by the rebuke of Christ. Peter became the incarnation of the tempter, and Jesus said "get thee behind me, Satan."

I was sailing up the Delaware River toward Philadelphia. I saw the statue of William Penn looming like a great giant, now seeming far away and now very near, the great, broad-brimmed hat of the Quaker of early days giving hint to approaching pedestrians of the

benignancy and kindliness of simpler times. Often I had stood beneath that statue on the top of the public buildings to get a better view. On this particular day I was greatly interested as we followed the bends of the river and approached the city of brotherly love. At last I landed at Arch Street wharf and presently stood at Broad and Market streets and looked up into the face of the founder of Pennsylvania.

Jesus Christ is the colossal figure of the ages. He seems to us often to be far away, but we are coming nearer, and by and by we shall stand before him and look up into his face, the founder of our faith, the foundation of our Christianity, and we then shall have reached the time when we shall all come unto the unity of faith, and unto the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

THIRTEENTH WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION

It will be held in the city of Durban, in the Province of Natal, in the Union of South Africa, July 22-28, 1940. This will be the first representative gathering of Christian leaders from around the world ever to assemble upon the Continent of Africa. It will also mark the fiftieth anniversary of the First World's Sunday School Convention in London in 1889, which proved to be the forerunner of the ecumenical gatherings that under various auspices in this half century have contributed so largely to the growing sense of unity within the church universal. This is too the one hundredth anniversary of the departure in 1840 of David Livingstone from his home in Blantyre, Scotland, to make his first journey to this mighty continent, to whose enlightenment and uplift he was destined to make such an outstanding contribution.

Since 1898 these conventions have been held in Jerusalem, Rome, St. Louis, Washington, Zurich, Tokyo, Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro and Osolo.

From the Director's Desk

By Ulyss Stanford Mitchell, M.A., Th.D.

Director of Social and Adult Education

THE HAZARDS OF ALCOHOL

TRAFFIC HAZARDS¹

Dr. Richard Cabot, author of *What Men Live By*, recently made the following statement concerning moderate drinking:

"We used to think that moderate drinking—temperance, as the wets call it—did no harm. Now we know that it is responsible for an enormous loss of life through automobile accidents on our streets. One cocktail is enough to impair the dexterity and quickness of hand and foot, to spoil the man's judgment about speeds and distances, on which safe driving depends. Most of the drunken drivers arrested every week on our streets are not drunk in the ordinary sense. They are temperate drinkers; but they are the most dangerous of all drinkers in this fast-moving age. The man who is really drunk—the excessive drinker—rarely tries to drive a motor-car. It is the moderate drinkers who do most harm. They killed in 1931 more people in the United States than typhoid fever, diphtheria, and influenza put together.

"The effects of alcohol in killing people when much of it is taken within a short time are usually laid to 'bad liquor.' This is very rarely proved. Almost all deaths from drinking are due to too much 'good liquor.'"

IS ALCOHOL A FOOD?²

A food is not merely something which is useful for the normal life, growth, development, and reproduction of the human body, but it may be a fuel to be used as a source of energy.

There are three classes of foods: *first*, those which supply energy and also the materials out of which the body grows and repairs itself, such as milk, meat, and eggs; *next*, those which serve as fuel directly, and can be used to store up the fuel supply of the body—the sugars, starches, and fats; and *lastly*, such as can serve as a fuel but only for immediate use, and are incapable of making body material or building up body reserve. Alcohol belongs to this third class and is the only substance commonly used in diets which has this very limited food value. In the sense that a food is intended for body growth and repair and storage of energy, alcohol has no food value.

Even accepting alcohol among the foods in this extremely limited sense, its use in nutrition is restricted narrowly

by its poisonous effects upon the tissues of the body, particularly upon the brain and other portions of the nervous system.

Furthermore, when compared with our ordinary foods capable of supplying energy, beverage alcohol costs under all conditions of modern commercial production and distribution excessively in proportion to its fuel value.—*Haven Emerson, M. D.*

LIQUOR CONSUMPTION SOARS³

The monthly reports of the United States Internal Revenue Bureau show a steadily rising flood of liquor engulfing this country. According to the preliminary report, now available for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1937, the total consumption of all types of alcoholic liquors was:

	Gallons
Whisky and other distilled spirits	136,859,616
Beer and other fermented malt liquors	1,719,880,341
Wine or rectified spirits	36,784,792
Total consumption	1,878,169,388

Every monthly report, except two, during the fiscal year 1936-1937 shows an increase in whisky consumption over the corresponding month of the previous year, and every month, without exception, indicates an increase in beer consumption.

DRINKERS NOT WANTED!

Prospective students of Illinois State Normal University learn from the catalog that the institution "does not hesitate to express itself on the matter of admitting or continuing students who use intoxicating liquors."

In explaining the attitude of the university, this statement is made: "Since ability to consume intoxicating beverages, regardless of nature or quantity, is not a part of a teacher-training program and since employers of teachers, regardless of their personal attitude toward the liquor question, will not employ or continue in service teachers who use such intoxicants, Illinois State Normal University very emphatically states that the use of such intoxicants on or off the campus will not be permitted and the deviation from this regulation calls for severance of connections with the school. Because the institution feels justified in the interests of its reputation and that of its students and graduates in having such a regulation, it is hoped that persons who cannot live within both the letter and spirit of this procedure will not apply for admission to the university."

LINKS EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL EMPHASIS

"Schools in Christian Living should bring into focus the program and life of every church and every Christian who participates. Here are linked together *evangelism*, looking toward the new birth of the individual and social culture, and *social emphasis*, visioning the individual as a responsible member of the human family. This well-conceived program is not something more to be added, but a suggestion for better results from the present life of our churches. In Rhode Island we are urging every church to hold a "School in Christian Living."—*Everett Leslie Washburn, D.D., Westerly, R. I.*

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP PACKET, 25 cents. Prepared in cooperation with the Women's Christian Citizenship Committee especially for use by civic and citizenship chairmen. Equally suitable for use by men's and young people's groups. Contains: (1) A Bibliography for Christian Citizenship Committee; (2) Program Suggestions for Christian Citizenship Committee; (3) "Ham Preferred," by Florence B. Wilcox. (For use as a monologue or reading), (4) sixteen "Living Issues Leaflets" on various social problems including liquor traffic, and (5) miscellaneous enclosures of special value. Address: Citizenship Committee, Room 702, 1701-1703 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

ALCOHOL PROBLEMS VISUALIZED

A fine set of visualized temperance materials is available through our book stores. Over fifty illustrations, packed with facts. They cost 70 cents. The sets are 8½ x 11 inches, and are neatly bound in a paper cover. They have been produced through the National Forum and are excellent source material for teachers of all age groups.

¹From "Living Issues Leaflets," 2 cents each, published by The American Baptist Publication Society.

Missionary Education in the Sunday School

By Floy Lawrence Emhoff, Berthoud, Colorado

THE Sunday school is the logical place for missionary education. Children of all ages can be reached there. Their training is an insurance against the apathy and indifference of the future church toward missions. How may this be accomplished in the country or small-town church where there is a lack of equipment and leadership?

The superintendent and teachers should meet together and outline a definite plan. They will be surprised to find how much interest may be developed. It is always advisable to have a superintendent of missionary education, but this is not always possible. In the small school it can be left in the hands of the general superintendent.

The primary or beginners department is a most important field for this work. A small church in the Middle West has had a successful program of missionary education in operation for many years and the result is felt throughout the church. The children are taught missions from the day of their enrolment in the school. Pictures, maps and stories are used, and the particular projects supported by the children in the mission fields of this denomination are made vivid and real. The most forceful lesson is in the use of two offering-baskets. The children are taught to bring two offerings, one for themselves and one "for others." In prosperous times every child had two nickels, now it is two pennies, but the principle is the same. A lesson in giving is inculcated that is never forgotten. They know where the "money for others" goes and what it does, whether it is to be used in a school, a hospital for children, or a home for those who have no parents or friends.

During the summer vacation a chance is given for these children to show what they have learned. Good pedagogy provides for expression as well as impression, and

this opportunity is offered in the program given annually for the members of the Women's Missionary Society of the church, many of whom are the mothers and grandmothers of the participants. It is a day in June. The children come to the church in pretty summer dresses and fresh suits, all ready for the fun of a party. There are songs and recitations, and always a little missionary play. Some of the older ones talk about the mission fields of which they have learned, pointing out their location on the map. Then the women who have been guests become hostesses and serve light refreshments. This occasion is eagerly anticipated by both children and adults. The mothers learn about the work that is being done and are often aroused to an interest in missions that they have not hitherto known.

The missionary interest should be continued in the intermediate and older classes. The opening exercises afford a good opportunity. A short missionary story, well told—not read—will hold the attention of the entire school. All mission boards publish many such stories, especially adapted to this use. Older folks will listen with interest to a story for children, whereas children are bored by one that is intended for adults. Sometimes a few news items from mission fields may be given at this time, or a short dramatization. There has been great improvement in the missionary dramatizations sent out by the denominational boards and numbers of excellent ones are now available.

A fine project in missionary education is the sending of a Christmas box to a mission station by the entire school or by a class. This will arouse the interest of a group of boys as nothing else can, as they want to know about those to whom their gifts go. Girls like to prepare small gifts, dress dolls and make scrapbooks. There is

always a demand for rag-dolls and home-made toys. All mission boards have a secretary for specific work who should be consulted before such a project is attempted. If the Christmas box can be packed in a public way, perhaps at a Saturday afternoon gathering, it will add greatly to the interest.

A class of young women may carry on missionary work by sending small articles to a mission school, community center, or hospital. Napkins made from Indian head muslin, dusters, dish-cloths, holders, picture-books for children, and stories cut from magazines and placed in paper covers, for older patients in hospitals, are always acceptable. As in the case of Christmas boxes the specific work secretary should be consulted in making plans for such work.

In adult classes there is a great opportunity for stressing the importance of missions. Missionary education in the Sunday school is indeed a challenging opportunity.

HOW THE KARENS GIVE

Much has been told of their giving; of their self-supporting churches; of the missionary work which they carry on. Even so, I was not prepared for what I saw. Ko Tha Byu Hall is a huge concrete and brick structure which would do credit to the campus of any institution in the world, with an auditorium seating from twelve to fifteen hundred, with a splendid pipe organ. That magnificent structure was paid for entirely by the gifts of the Karens themselves. When we learned that eighteen to twenty-five cents a day is a good income for a Karen worker, that there are comparatively few among their number who have any large amount of money, all this becomes an expression of deep devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ and manifests a spirit of sacrifice which seems to know almost no limit. We wondered what the American churches could accomplish if they would match these Karens, who are descended in many cases from folks who but a little while ago were head-hunters and pagans on the hills of Burma.—*Albert W. Beeven.*

Dramatizing the Easter Offering

By Belle C. Morrill, Girard, Ohio

THE idea of an annual Easter offering from Sunday school classes and other organizations in the church was introduced several years ago by an energetic young man who came to us from an active parish in another city. The plan proved a godsend during the Depression years, when, in addition to being a church which normally had difficulty in raising a three-thousand-dollar budget, we suffered from being in an industrial community where at least a third of our members were thrown out of work. Under these conditions it seemed little short of miraculous that two hundred and fifty dollars should be raised through this special offering.

After the second year, however, the plan received some criticism, and even concern on the part of its advocates, because of its effect on the Easter service. A dramatic service which would embody the best in each type of service, seemed to be a solution to our problem.

The following is the presentation service as given:

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TWO ANGELS; girls in the upper teens.

WOMEN AT THE TOMB; one each from the three women's classes and the women's missionary society.

PETER AND JOHN AT THE TOMB; an older and a young man from the two men's classes.

RHODA AND JOHN MARK OF THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH; boy from senior young people's society, and girl from junior organization.

MARY OF BETHANY; girl from senior high school girl's class.

TIMOTHY; boy from senior high school boy's class.

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER; girl from junior high school class.

BOY WITH THE LOAVES; boy from junior department.

CHILDREN JESUS BLESSED; girl from primary and one from beginners department.

Each of these characters in biblical costume formed a tableau at the rear of the pulpit platform, and was followed immediately by a representative of that class or group in modern dress, who presented the class gift, with a speech that linked together the ancient and modern characters. When more than one class appeared in the same tableau, each class sent its representative with the gift, but only one spoke for the group.

SETTING

Scenery representing the empty tomb, a hill with three crosses and cloud effects above, covered the whole of the rear wall. Inside the doorway of the tomb, disarranged cloths were heaped on a low bench; the whole interior illuminated softly by a hidden light inside. A natural alcove, with doors on each side, made it possible to confine the tableaux to this rear section of the platform, while the modern characters used the front of the platform. The two angels, facing each other and holding between them a large silver tray for the gifts, knelt at the central edge of the platform, the front of which was banked with lilies. No curtains were used.

Angel costumes were of cheese-cloth, with flowing pieces attached to the back of the neck and to each wrist by a cord. A band of tinsel was worn about the head. Women's costumes consisted of drapes and headdresses over loose foundations, in various colors, except RHODA, who was in white with a red embroidered cross on the front of her dress (suggested by Harold Copping's picture of Priscilla). JAIRUS' DAUGHTER wore a filmy headdress over her face, which could be lifted to symbolize her awakening. For MARY OF BETHANY, a girl with long hair was chosen.

PROLOGUE. (Superintendent.) On the first day of the week, at

early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen."

Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

"And he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." In the spirit of these words let us bring our gifts to our risen Lord and to his church.

(Women come to the tomb with small jars for spices. Look in, and leave hurriedly. Representative with gifts enter, front left entrance.)

GROUP SPEAKER. As the women brought sweet spices to the tomb of their Lord, so we bring our offering to him this Easter morn.

(All place money in envelopes on the tray held by the angels, and leave platform at the right, waiting in an adjoining room until time to take assigned seats in the church.)

(PETER and JOHN enter. Look in the tomb, PETER showing more impulsiveness than JOHN. Leave. Men with gifts enter.)

YOUNGER MAN. As John the youngest disciple, and Peter the man of mature years sought their Lord together that Easter morning so we come together with our gift today. *(Present gifts and leave above.)*

(RHODA and JOHN MARK enter stand facing front of platform with hands in attitude of prayer.)

and then leave with hands still together. Representatives of young people's societies enter.)

SPEAKER. As we read of two young people, Rhoda and John Mark, who were members of that first church in Jerusalem, we young people of today are proud to follow in their footsteps, as we bring our gift to our church. (Exit.)

(MARY OF BETHANY enters, kneels in front of the tomb in a profile pose, and goes through the motion of pouring from a small jar in her hand. Rises and leaves. Modern representative enters.)

SPEAKER. As Mary of Bethany anointed the feet of Jesus with costly ointment, so we young people of today would show our love by this gift. (Exit.)

(TIMOTHY, with tablet in hand, enters, sits on low bench, and writes. Rises and leaves. Modern representative enters.)

SPEAKER. Even as Timothy, the young man, wrote letters for Paul, and shared in the burdens of his missionary work, so we young men present this gift as a sign of our allegiance. (Exit.)

(JAIRUS' DAUGHTER enters slowly, a thin veil over her face; throws it back, opens eyes wider, and looks around as if awakening from sleep, then goes out. Boy and girl with class gifts enter.)

SPEAKER. As Jesus gave new life to Jairus' daughter and the nobleman's son, so his friendship makes life richer for us today, and we are glad to bring him this gift. (Exit.)

(BOY WITH LOAVES enters, holding tray with five round biscuits on it. Fish, being very small, need not be represented. Holds pose for a second, and leaves. Junior boy enters.)

SPEAKER. I'd like to have been the boy who gave Jesus his lunch of bread and fish that day, when the people were hungry. But we uniors can give him the money we earned by carolling, and giving up things for ourselves.¹ (Exit.)

(Girl from primary department leads a girl from beginners department by the hand, and speaks:)

¹ Represents what they actually did to earn their money.

"When Jesus came along our street,
That was a happy day;
He took the babies in his arms,
And watched us at our play."
(Exit)

(Enter primary boy with beginner boy. Each have their department gift. Primary boy speaks:)

"We do not see him on our street,
But in our hearts we know
He loves the children just as much
As in the long ago."
(Exit)

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT. If any of you have further gifts you would like to put into the Easter offering, the ushers will receive them—and the regular church envelopes—during the singing of hymn —.

(After the hymn was sung, a choir anthem, and a ten-minute talk by the pastor gave sufficient time for the finance committee to count the offering. The total amount was announced, followed immediately by the Doxology and Benediction, after which the congregation was asked to remain seated. The blackboard with detailed figures for separate classes was then brought in.)

In order to show how other elements were correlated with the gift presentation, the plan of the entire unified service is given here:

ORGAN PRELUDE. Variations on Easter hymns.

CALL TO WORSHIP. (Used by the early Christians at Easter):

Leader. The Lord is risen!
Congregation. He is risen indeed!

HYMN. "In the Cross of Christ I Glory."
READING. "An Easter Creed"; teacher from adult department.

PRAYER. Pastor.

EASTER SPIRITUAL, WITH TABLEAUX,
"He Rose," junior department,
assisted by choir.

RECITATIONS. Beginners department.

SONG. "Waiting to Grow," primary department.

HYMN. "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

PRESENTATION SERVICE.

HYMN. "The Church's One Foundation."

ANTHEM. Choir.

EASTER MESSAGE. Pastor.

REPORT OF OFFERING.

DOXOLOGY.

BENEDICTION.

ADULT COURSES IN PITTSBURGH

The First Baptist church school of Pittsburgh recently put out the following card:

(Front of card)

AN ADVENTURE IN ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Age and sex no longer determine the Sunday school class to which you belong. You are free to choose any one of several short-term courses. Enrol now by filling in registration blank on back of card.

(Back of card)

Place a check in the block opposite the course you prefer

- ☐ THE CHURCH AND CURRENT ISSUES. A Christian interpretation of present-day happenings in relation to the church leader. W. M. Ledwith.
- ☐ THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS. (The Kings of Israel.) Mrs. Powers Pace.
- ☐ A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. The great affirmations of the Christian faith. W. W. Mendenhall.
- ☐ THE LIFE OF JESUS. James Mace.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. No. _____

SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CAN BE INCREASED

(Concluded from page 6)

be rendered. Only this motivation will make for permanent results. People need God, and never more than in these days; God needs people, and never more than in these days. We face this as God's task. We are his helpers in an enterprise upon which the future of civilization depends. If we go forward not in our own strength, but with a sense of his strength, his power, and his companionship, we will win multitudes to the Sunday church school, the church, and to God.

SCHOOLS of religion, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other character-building organizations are less expensive but strategically more valuable than criminal courts, reformatories, armies, navies and prisons.

PRACTICAL USE OF "MAKE-BELIEVE"

By Zuella Cooke, San Diego, Calif.

Small children live much of the time in the "Land of Make-Believe." To them it is a happier and more interesting place than the "Land of Reality." That is why Johnny was so reluctant to leave his play to get washed, eat lunch and have Mother dress him for kindergarten. Every day for a week there had been a stormy scene that was wearing upon them both. Mother had reached the point of desperation, for Johnny was beginning to "hate the old kindergarten."

One day Mother wisely decided these very necessary realities could be accomplished while still in the "Land of Make-Believe." She overheard that her small son was taking a trip in his new automobile. Taking her cue, she called to him, "Say, mister, don't you want to stop by my restaurant and have a bite to eat before you go on?"

"Sure," answered Johnny. "I am hungry; I have been driving all day."

"Then some of my vegetable pie and bread-and-jam cake ought to taste good," said Mother as she stacked and cut bread and jam to look like cake.

"And how about a glass of cold milk, lady?"

"Certainly," agreed Mother; "we always keep cold milk in this restaurant."

Before Johnny realized it, he had been washed and was seated on a stool at the "counter."

"Twenty-five cents, please," said Mother when he had finished. Reaching in his pocket, Johnny solemnly took out a button, which Mother just as solemnly took and dropped into the pocket of her apron.

"Traveling gets one's clothes pretty dirty," Mother remarked. "There is a clothing-store next door to my restaurant. Would you like to buy yourself a new suit?"

"Sure, lady. I had a flat tire a while ago; that's why my clothes are dirty," he explained, as Mother led him to the "clothing-store" in the bedroom.

"How do you like this suit?" she asked, holding up a freshly-laundered one of blue with a white collar.

"I'll buy it," said Johnny at once.

"Then let's see if it fits you," suggested Mother; and soon a smiling and happy Johnny was ready for kindergarten.

"Good-bye, mister." Then Mother was "out of character" long enough to kiss him warmly. "I hope you'll stop by my restaurant again some day."

"Maybe I will on my way back," called her little boy, as he went skipping down the sidewalk in the bright October sunshine.

WHO'S WHO AMONG SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

By J. Elmer Russell

FROM what occupations are our Sunday school teachers drawn? Dr. George Gleason set himself to answer this question, especially as it refers to teachers of young married folks' Bible classes. The results of his studies are published in full in his doctorate thesis, *Church Group Activities for Young Married People*.

Of the 389 teachers studied, Dr. Gleason reports that "220 are pastors, pastors' wives, school or college teachers, religious education or social workers, missionaries, lecturers, or are engaged in one of twenty-nine occupations which would indicate some teaching preparation."

But while more than half of the teachers were drawn from occupations where they may have had some special teaching experience, there were 169 drawn from various professions, trades, and forms of business where no special fitness is indicated.

"Where can we find enough teachers?" is a question I have been asked scores of times. Dr. Gleason's list of occupations among 389 teachers suggests how much larger is the clientele for possible leaders than is often supposed.

For example, here are occupations which furnished one or more teachers: auctioneer, banker, car-

penyer, chemist, chiropractor, contractor, city clerk, city attorney, civil engineer, druggist, editor, gardener, grocer, interior decorator, investment broker, jeweler, judge, librarian, lawyer, manager of insurance agency, manufacturer, mason, masseuse, mayor of city, meat dealer, newspaper agent, nurse, painter, photographer, physician, printer, playground superintendent, postmaster, post-office employee, rancher, real estate dealer, saleswoman, secretary of building and loan association, soldier, truck driver, and warehouse man.

Humor

VISITOR. "Tell your master that a friend wishes to speak to him."

MAID. "You must have mistaken the house—the income-tax collector lives here."

A LITTLE boy, after his first day at school, was questioned as to what happened at his first day.

"Nothing much," he said, "except that the teacher didn't know how to spell 'cat'! She asked me how; and I told her."

STREET ORATOR. "We must get rid of radicalism, socialism, Bolshevism, communism, and anarchism."

VOICE FROM THE CROWD. "And while we're about it, why not throw in rheumatism?"

"PEOPLE are queer," remarked Jones Smith. "What makes you say that?" asked Smith.

"If you tell a man there are 267,543,210 stars in the universe he will believe you, but if a sign says, 'Fresh paint,' he will have to investigate personally."

TIMID LOVER. "Do you believe marriages are made in heaven?"

SHE. "I should not be surprised, if a man takes as long to make a proposal as you do."

FARMER CORNTASSEL had just retired and moved to town. In the morning after spending the first night in the new home, his wife said, "Well, paw, hain't it about time you was getting up to build the fire?"

"No, siree," replied the old man. "I'll call the fire department. We might as well get used to these city conveniences right now."

Two little boys were astride a non-too-large hobby-horse. Things eventually came to the point where one little rider said to the other, "If one of us would get off, I could ride better."

Recent Books

Order All Books from The American Baptist Publication Society

PSYCHOLOGY FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHERS. By Alfred L. Murray. Round Table Press. 1938. 245 pages. Price, \$2.00.

Concerning this new volume, Austen K. de Blois, president emeritus of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, writes: "*Psychology for Christian Teachers*, by Alfred L. Murray, is an admirable book for all church school workers. The author has applied, in non-technical language, the principles of psychology to the work of all departments in the church school. He has truly made psychology a fascinating subject. The book is scientific, yet decidedly Christian in its approach. Ministers, parents and church school leaders will find invaluable material, well presented, in these pages."

FIRST THINGS FIRST. By Agness Boyen. Associated Authors. 1938. 185 pages. Price, \$2.00.

The author, internationally known for her work in character education and as principal of the Lyndale School, Minneapolis, here presents the philosophy and the methods that she has successfully demonstrated in her own school, and that are today finding wide acceptance among educators everywhere.

THESE BOYS OF OURS. By Frank H. Cheley. Fleming H. Revell Company. 1938. 120 pages. Price, \$1.25.

The boy problem is really a parent problem. The author, who is himself dad and the owner and director of the Cheley Colorado Camps, speaks from experience and in plain language, giving practical advice to parents who would understand their boys.

YOUTH'S PROBLEM No. 1. By Alfred L. Murray. Zondervan Publishing House. 1938. 206 pages. Price, \$1.39.

Friendship, courtship and marriage are three phases of the youth problem to which this book offers truly Christian solutions. Mr. Murray shows that the inner human relationships thrive only in the soil of Christian character. He meets the specific problems of modern young people with specific suggestions based on personal experience, practical psychology, and the teachings of Christ.

THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH. By Charles M. Jacobs, late president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. 114 pages. Price, \$1.00.

Devotional addresses on the Apostles' Creed, delivered in the Seminary chapel and published by request of those who heard them. Personal religious values and the basic certainties of our faith are emphasized.

MATURING IN THE MINISTRY. By Eugene D. Dolloff. Round Table Press. 215 pages. Price, \$2.00.

Mr. Dolloff has served for twenty-four years as a pastor in Greater Boston. He is now with the large West Medford Baptist Church. This volume deals with the Christian ministry as a career, pointing out its possibilities and its dangers. In the first chapter it discusses the ministry's exacting demands. There follow such practical subjects as "The Temptations of the Ministry," "The Pastor and Youth," "The Pastor and the Adult," and "The Wellspring of Victorious Power."

PRACTICAL PRAYER. By Hugh Redwood. Fleming H. Revell Company. 1938. 128 pages. Price, \$1.00.

The author is a capable journalist and a lay preacher. The "spiritual glow" that characterizes all his writing goes far to explain the wide circulation and acceptance his books have received in England, and they are rapidly becoming equally well known in America. This treatment of prayer is sane and convincing. Such a book is sure to accomplish much good.

UP TO NOW: A STORY OF CROWDED YEARS. By Charles Forbes Taylor. Fleming H. Revell Company. 1938. 140 pages. Price, \$1.50.

The fascinating and unusual life-story—*Up to Now*—of "Charlie" Taylor, who, when he first came to America, was known as the "boy evangelist." The book is written in an engaging fashion and shows the deep joy which its author has had in preaching the gospel.

THE CASE FOR THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY. By William Adams Brown. The University of Chicago Press. 1938. 124 pages. Price, \$1.50.

The president of the University of Chicago recently brought a sweeping indictment against our modern universities. They are in a chaotic state, he said, because they have no unifying principle to give definiteness and consistence to their policy. Theology once served this purpose, but theology no longer suffices. William Adams Brown, long associated with Union Theological Seminary, answers Dr. Hutchins. In three thoughtful lectures he presents the case for theology. Theology, he would make clear, is not limited to a blind acceptance of a revealed faith; it may be regarded as "the philosophy of the Christian religion." Theology today, as in the past, should be put at the center, for theology can open the way to a meaningful and harmonious life. President Hutchins graciously contributes the preface. He is happy to note that he differs with Dr. Brown only in details. This volume is not large, but it is important. It will be studied closely by all who feel a genuine concern for the future of higher education.

IS IT RIGHT, OR WRONG? By Nolan B. Harmon, Jr. Cokesbury Press. 1938. 231 pages. Price, \$1.50.

Treats of Sunday Amusements, Divorce and Remarriage, Gambling vs. Investment, the Church-State Relationship, War, and the Economic Problem. Dr. Harmon helpfully clarifies each issue. He draws upon Scripture, the historic teaching of the church, and present-day conditions and interpretations in arriving at Christian solutions.

TEN RULES FOR LIVING. By Clovis G. Chappell. Cokesbury Press. 1938. 178 pages. Price, \$1.50.

Sermons dealing with the Ten Commandments. They possess freshness and virility. Each of the "Ten Rules" is first given a clear exposition, then practically applied to modern life. Dr. Chappell is one of the foremost preachers of the South, and his sermons abound in telling illustrations and striking statements.

THE REBIRTH OF VENKATA REDDI: A STORY OF INDIA. By Pearl Dorr Longley. The Judson Press. 349 pages. Illustrated. Price, \$2.00.

This is not a missionary-book, in the usual sense; it is a gripping novel of family and social life in the India of today. The position of woman, child marriage, Mahatma Gandhi, are constantly to the fore in the narrative. The author has been engaged in missionary work in South India for thirty years and has had an intimacy with Indian life that few are privileged to enjoy. Her pictures and revelations must be taken as of great value. The tortures of Venkata Reddi and his son Rajanna as they seek the newer freedom, and the wall of woman's cruel bondage to the past that they have to encounter give the book a poignant, almost desperate tone; yet it is free from the callous pessimism of *The Good Earth*, or the overdrawn realism of Katherine Mayo. Good judges of this sort of literature predict that the book will have a wide reading.

Lesson Topics for February

- February 5. PETER PREACHES AT PENTECOST; WHAT THE PREACHING SERVICE MEANS TO ME. Acts 2: 5-18, 36-41.
- February 12. PETER HEALS A LAME MAN; OR WHAT CHRISTIANS HAVE TO SHARE. Acts 3: 1 to 4: 22.
- February 19. HAZARDS IN THE USE OF ALCOHOL IN A MACHINE AGE. (Temperance Lesson.) Amos 6: 1-6; 1 Peter 2: 11, 12; 4: 1-5.
- February 26. PETER IN SAMARIA; KEEPING RELIGION FROM COMMERCIALISM. Acts 8: 4-25.

International Sunday School Lessons

(Improved Uniform Series)

First Quarter, 1939: Life and Work of Peter

AIM: To learn from the experiences, activities and teachings of Peter how the spirit and ideals of Christ may find practical expression in our experience and life today

These lessons are developed from outlines prepared by the Committee on Improved Uniform Lessons of the International Council. The outlines are copyrighted, 1937, by the International Council of Religious Education and are used by permission.

Lesson 1. January 1

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

John 1: 40-42; Luke 5: 1-11

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D.D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Isaiah 6: 1-8

KEY VERSE: Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.—Mark 1: 17

John 1: 40-42

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Luke 5: 1-11

1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the

deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Sunday. Worthy of the Call. Eph. 4: 1-13. In the estimation of men Scarcely! But Christ sees in us what man don't and can't—"What I am worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

At the Threshold of the Lesson

The American philosopher, Josiah Royce, defined loyalty as "the voluntary, practical, thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a person or cause." Real loyalty, true devotion to Christ, must be practical. This is the matter that the lessons of the present quarter take up to learn to express in our lives the spirit and ideals of Jesus, using the apostle Peter as a study background.

Why Peter? Because he is excellent teaching material. This apostle has always had a peculiar fascination for Bible readers. Maybe because he is so representative of a lot of us. Joseph Parker said that every time he read the word of Peter's denial he heard the possible echo of his own voice. We see ourselves in Peter as we do not, for example, in John the Beloved. In many respects Simon Peter isn't an admirable character, but—well, like Jacob, he is human.

The prominence of Peter in the New Testament narrative is shown by the fact that Matthew has 24 separate mentions of his name and Acts 58. Indeed, we know more about him than any of the rest of the Twelve. It is more than an inference that he was Jesus' right-hand man, a sort of captain of the apostolic band.

The Lesson Before Us

I. CALLED. John 1: 40-42

The initiation of the Twelve into Jesus' discipleship was gradual. These Galilean fishermen became interested in Jesus and his teaching, as did hundreds of others. At first they kept him com-

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Becoming Acquainted with Jesus. John 1: 35-42. They wanted to know where he was stopping, that they might unhurriedly learn to know him and his teaching. Jesus says, "Abide," as well as "Come"—if we would enter fully into his fellowship (John 15).

Tuesday. The Call of Peter. Luke 5: 1-11. It was to service; to "catch men"—the work of an evangelist. Are not all of Christ's calls like calls to specific tasks?

Wednesday. Willingness to Serve. Luke 5: 27-32. The phraseology here is common to the Gospels (cf. also "straightway," in Matt. 4: 20). It is

preposterous to think you can be a follower of Christ's sitting, or lying down.

Thursday. The Need of Helpers. Matt. 9: 35-38. The harvest was there, and he was the husbandman—with divine power and resources; but still he needed fellow laborers; and always will.

Friday. Divine Partnership. John 15: 7-16. Paul likes to think of the Christian as a bond-slave of Jesus Christ. The Master himself, however, thinks of Christians as his friends.

Saturday. Refusing to Serve. Matt. 19: 16-21. How can we serve Christ, do any useful work for him, when our hands are full of our own affairs? There must be something besides willingness—even sacrifice.

pany at times, but not all the time. From among many, Jesus had his eye on this dozen men in particular.

Some little time elapsed between this meeting and their definite commitment to his cause, recorded in Luke 1:11 (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). There was a third and final step in this initiation, which in our common version is made their ordination (Mark 3:14).

These first fishermen disciples were more or less followers of John the Baptist, who seems to have encouraged them now to give their allegiance to the Teacher of Nazareth. But they were among those of Israel who were eagerly expecting the Messiah (Latin "Messias").

II. ANDREW THE INTRODUCER

The other of "the two" (vs. 40), would of course be the evangelist himself. Andrew has plenty of distinction besides being the bringer to Jesus of his more distinguished brother. He became one of the inner group of four. Tradition ascribes to him a long and useful missionary career after his Master's going away. Both Russia and Scotland made him patron saint. It's a fine thing also to have a cross named for you! We are to study about Simon Peter, but let us do honor to Brother Andrew, who introduced him to Jesus.

III. SIMON BARJONA

In Matthew (16:17) he is so named *—bar* being the Aramaic word for "son." Jonas is the Greek, Jonah the Hebrew form of the name John. R. V. has John (vs. 42). Cephas is the Aramaic word for rock, which in the Greek of the New Testament becomes Petros; and so in English, Peter. There are other instances in the New Testament (Saul—Paul) where a life crisis is marked by the bestowal of a new name. Our Lord "knew what was in man" (John 2:25). So here, his divine glance saw in Simon the making of a rock of a man.

We find this naming repeated, when they were in "the coasts" of Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. 16:18). Perhaps here in John's account it is prophetic ("thou shalt be called"); in that other instance we have, "thou *art* Peter" (rock). Not yet the Rock of faith he was to be, for the shameful denial came after this; but there had been advancement. Simons are never perfectly Peters, but only always Peters in the making. What an encouragement, that Christ lets us be called by his name before we are entirely Christians.

IV. FISHERMEN DISCIPLES. Luke 5:1-11

Luke 5:1-11 is peculiar to this Gospel, but the first four verses are practically paralleled in Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20, while the miraculous draught of fishes suggests John 2:1-10.

The Lake. The Sea of Galilee is known also as Lake Gennesaret, from the plain of that name to its northwest

(in 1 Maccabees 11:67 it is called "the water of Gennesar"), and as the Sea of Tiberias, from the city on its western shore. In the Old Testament it is called the Sea of Chinneroth (Joshua 12:3). It is about six miles wide and twelve long, pear-shaped. Its waters are noted for abundant fish. So much of the ministry of Jesus was carried on around this little body of water that it has been called a Fifth Gospel.

They will have been listening to Jesus' preaching as they worked. People do that in the Orient. It is interesting to see how ingeniously Jesus acts here. The boat will make a fine pulpit, from which all can hear, and not the few—to crowd and interrupt. Then he uses their bad fishing luck to teach them a lesson that will be needed in all their after work for him; an acted parable. In his service men must never be discouraged; nor will there ever be reason for it. If we do as he says, follow his directions, we shall win out, abundantly; even in the exacting work of soul-winning (fishing for men).

The word "ship" (vss. 2, 7) used here is indeed the Greek word for ship, but the vessel will have been a small one, a boat. We now restrict "ship" to larger vessels; the old English usage is seen in our "skiff."

There is much psychology and also much human nature experience in Simon Peter's conduct here (vs. 8). The man who can bring about such a wonder, it seems to him, must be both supernaturally endowed and very holy. Peter shrinks away from him with the dread, not of fear, but of wonder—and of his unworthiness to be in such a presence. Peter is, beginning to see that here is more than an ordinary rabbi; though it will be many a day before he recognizes this whole, wondrous Personality. In Matthew 14:28, notice, it is, not "Depart," but "Bid me come to thee."

V. FISHERS OF MEN

"Shalt catch men" (vs. 10) should be given its full literal meaning, "shalt be catching men alive." This dignifies the figure. There is the contrast between the fish that lay there in dead heaps on the lakeshore and men who should be captured not for death (James 1:15), but for life. Or in Saint Clement's hymn:

O fisher of mortals who are being saved,
Enticing pure fish for sweet life from
the hostile wave!

The sense is, "By teaching thou shalt win their souls for everlasting life." The figure as used by Jesus should be kept free from the cunning and artifice that we associate with angling. It was net-fishing.

From this passage and the parable of Matthew 13:47, 48 the fish became the favorite symbol of early Christianity. It is a common inscription on the catacombs of Rome. The five letters that in

Greek spell the word fish constituted the anagram of the Christian faith, because they were seen to be the initials of the confession, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour" (*Jesous CHristos THEou UIos Soter*). Believers would sometimes indicate their ownership of vessels or other objects by inscribing them with this anagram, or the drawing of a fish.

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ Consider Christ's need of us, today. If he hadn't chosen those first fishermen helpers his gospel and Kingdom would scarcely be in the world now; and without twentieth century helpers he would now be a non-functioning Saviour.
- ¶ Consider that Christ started his Kingdom (church) not with a seminary of theologians, or a school of philosophers, or a council of statesmen, or a staff of generals, but with a handful of fresh-water fishermen. If he could use them, he can use many of us who think we are of no great account.
- ¶ Why must we suppose that these fishermen knew something of Christ and his teaching before their call? Is it fair to ask men to be followers of Christ until they have some idea of what it means?
- ¶ Apply Jesus' calling and training of a selected company of apostles to "leadership training" in our church and church school work. What do you know of such training in our denomination?
- ¶ Notice how largely "Try again" enters into Jesus' teaching and practice (vss. 5, 6). Thus "a gospel of the second chance."

Notes and Comments

"Let none fancy that he can succeed by himself; even Christ chose assistants."—*Erdman*.

"Without Peter, humanly speaking, the infant church must have perished in its cradle; he it was who, under God's blessing, caught the truth which was to be the polar star of its future history; who guided it safely through the dangers of its first existence; who, when the time came for launching it into a wider ocean, preserved it by his retirement from the helm which was destined for another hand. He was the rock, not the builder of the Christian society; the founder, not the propagator, nor the finisher; the Moses of its exodus, not the David of its triumph, nor the Daniel of its latter days."—*Dean Stanley*.

"Fishers of men"—that is what we all ought to be. We are saved that we may become saviours. How may we become 'fishers of men'? Not by our own cleverness or skill: 'I will make you to become fishers of men,' says our Lord."—*Devotional Commentary*.

Teachers' Helps

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman,¹ Columbus, Ohio

PETER CALLED TO SERVE

Just a few minutes ago, on this September twenty-seven, I heard the Queen of England speak at the launching of the Cunard Line's S. S. Queen Elizabeth. "The launching of a ship," said she, "is like all great enterprises; it is an act of faith." (That was her thought, if not her exact words.)

The launching of a life is a great enterprise. It is an act of faith. It is a spiritual adventure. Peter had pushed his fishing-smack from the shore many times in his habitual hunt for the means of livelihood. On this occasion, the sight of Jesus pushed not the boat but Peter himself into the great adventure of the soul. "From now on," Jesus said to him, "you will be fishing for men." It was a call.

Life is one summons after another. Just now the horrible specter of war looms before us to sadden the heart. (Let me express the earnest hope of us all, that by the time this is printed, peace will have been declared.) The broadcasting companies are connecting us with Paris, Berlin, London, Rome, Prague. Mobilization is on. Apprehension grips us. Sons and husbands called—for what? When is Christianity going to outlaw war? In addressing the world from Geneva very recently, Eammon de Valera as president of the Assembly of the League of Nations stated his belief that the world is getting a little better. He saw in the solidifying public opinion of many nations a real interest in justice and a fixed determination to find through collective action a peaceful means of settlement. Did Jesus call Peter to get ready for tanks, poison gas, destructive bombs and submarines?

A few days of this month I spent in Montreal. While visiting the Oratory of St. Joseph I noticed a woman apparently doing penance. On her knees she was climbing the long stone steps, saying prayers as she proceeded. At the shrine on the top of the hill, I saw Christians writing on pieces of paper, provided at a little writing desk, their desires and then depositing the papers in a box at the altar. The next day in a theater I saw and heard "Life Marches On" present a baptismal scene. It showed Negro immersion. The comments, part of the news picture, were intended to bring laughter by referring to immersion as "ducking," and by other very improper (as it seemed to me) remarks. Now it

is a long, long time from Peter the fisherman to us modern followers of the same Jesus who called him and calls us. It is very obvious that "following" means one thing to one and another to another. It is obvious also that the world tends to confuse the externals of Christianity (worship, ritual, "means of grace") with the compelling spirit of devotion and service prompting a Peter to bring the boat to land, leave everything and follow him.

Did you ever pass by a fish-market? Did you ever watch a fisherman mending his net? How did you like the odor? It must have occurred to you that Peter was smelly. Maybe he had some fish-scales and slime on his hands. Apparently Jesus judged men by their inner soul and not by their outer soil.

Jewish leaders today point out that this past year has been the worst in Jewish history—persecutions, sufferings, losses. In the world at large, democracy and dictatorship are openly in struggle. Herr Hitler said he could come to terms with Italy and Poland because he was in each case dealing with one man, but he could get nowhere with democracies because of their necessarily slow operations. This is essentially a declaration of faith in self only. Educational and cultural considerations foster class distinctions just as do professional, racial and business considerations. Peter's call by Jesus may be looked upon as a basis for a declaration of independence by the common man.

In Thomas Mann's *Joseph in Egypt*, Joseph says to Kedema, one of the caravan to which his brothers sold him:

"For I know that you, my masters, journey whither you will and on your own affairs and of a certainty no question of mine meaneth any wrong to your dignity of power. But lo, the world hath many centers, one for each created being, and about each one it lieth in its own circle. Thou standest but half an ell from me, yet about thee lieth a universe whose center I am not but thou art. Therefore both are true, according as one speaketh from thy center or from mine. And I, on the other hand, stand in the center of mine. For our universes are not far from each other so that they do not touch; rather hath God pushed them and interwoven them deep into each other, so that you Ishmaelites do indeed journey quite independently and according to your own ends, whither you will, but besides that you are the means and tool, in our interwovenness, that I arrive at my goal. Therefore I ask whither you are leading me."

Peter's call glorified the individual. The call was for a social purpose—to become a fisher for men. Wrapped up in

the circumstances of the call are the lure of a new life, equality before God, and the potentialities of service.

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

Many people like biography, stories of real people. They read about what they have done and it creates a desire in the reader to imitate them. We learn in biography how and why others succeeded and we also learn to profit by their mistakes and failures. This is all ahead of us as we study the life of Peter for several weeks. Most of the Scripture references are very familiar. Many of them we have studied in recent months. We now are looking at them standing by the side of the man who, next to Jesus himself, is the center of interest, and in any case a most interesting character.

Let us watch Peter this first month and as we stand beside him in the training school. Later we shall want to see him in action on his own.

The call of God comes to Peter more than once and in more than one way. We should remember that when we are tempted to judge other people's experience with God by our own.

First. The call of God came to Peter through his family—in this case his brother. It might have been just curiosity to know if Andrew was right in his surmise that this new preacher was the Messiah. Lesser motives than that have drawn people into revival meetings or other places where they have met God. Doing things because the family does it is a powerful motive and we should not discount it. It is also a great responsibility to the members of the family. Many young people who come into our churches come because they have been brought up Baptists (same way with other denominations). There is a story often told at Christmastime, "If he had not come." This story brings in some of the things we have like hospitals, churches, Sunday schools, and orphanages because Jesus came. If we are of a speculative turn of mind, we may list some of the things that happened because Peter answered Andrew's invitation in the affirmative. Teachers could make a list of the passages of the New Testament that would have to be omitted if Peter had not come. To come nearer home let us ask ourselves if there are any boys or young men in our family or church whom we could invite to meet Jesus. The Master might change their lives on a big scale as he did the young man Simon.

Second. The call to individual service. Jesus used something Peter owned. Then he asked Peter to do something for him. It was only a little thing; push the boat out from shore a little way so the speaker could be heard by a larger group. Then Jesus asked Peter to do something for himself. All very simple requests

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but they were the means of starting this man on his career of leadership. I sometimes think that we underestimate the stimulus given to young people when we ask them to do something. We should deliberately plan to share the church work with them. They and we will be surprised at their ability to do things.

Third. Your mission in life and your success is not to be financial. Peter answered the first two calls. Then came his great commission. "Fear not; from this time you shall be a catcher of men" (Weymouth). You are not to consider your success from a financial standpoint but from a spiritual one. Fishing was important, but not the most important thing in life. Dr. Ashley D. Leavitt of Boston recently told a graduating class of nurses, "We are coming to believe that all this material order is very limited in what it can do for us—our living. In recent weeks we have seen that a dependence upon the material world brings a hunger for wealth, a lust for power. I have looked into all the

hopes that men have derived from the power of wealth and can see nothing but discouragement—no courage or vision—and I have resolved to give myself more unqualifiedly to a belief in spiritual things." That was where Jesus asked Peter to stand. The same call holds for Christians today.

The Lesson Illustrated

THE CALL THAT GETS AN ANSWER

My daughter plays beautifully on her pianoforte in the next room to my study; it does not divert me from my reading and writing in general, but now and then she touches a chord; down goes my pen, and I do not see a word in my book; all I can do is to listen. Now whilst you are preaching, one has wandered in thought to his farm, another to his merchandise, a third to converse with his friends; *but touch the keynote, set forth in a Saviour's love*—for "the love of Christ constraineth us"—let your own heart be well in tune with it, and theirs will respond.—*Cecil.*

Lesson 2. January 8

THE PLACE OF COMMENDATION AND REBUKE

Matt. 16: 13-25. (Parallels in Mark 8 and Luke 9)

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D.D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Colossians 1: 9-18

KEY VERSE: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.—Matt. 16: 16

13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou

shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

men away from the cross; who tells them to shun self-sacrifice.

Thursday. Winning the Approval of Jesus. Matt. 10: 34-42. With what simple, easy things can we please Christ! A few words of honest confession, a measure or two of praise! Yet, alas! so often we neglect it!

Friday. The Faith of the Centurion. Matt. 8: 5-13. He hadn't had the advantages of religious training, as the Jews had; but such persons not infrequently are the first to recognize the power of God.

Saturday. Intolerance Rebuked. Luke 9: 51-55. While Jesus never scolded, he did rebuke, and sometimes vigorously condemn. It will pay us to notice how wisely and beautifully he did it.

Sunday. The Preeminence of Christ. Col. 1: 9-18. May we not look for the secret of Paul's power and success and sterling Christian character just here—that he put Christ ahead of and above everyone and everything else?

At the Threshold of the Lesson

Jesus had taken his little apostolic band up into the beautiful north country to be alone with them, in order to give them fuller instruction in the truths and program of his Kingdom. "Wandering divinity school" is a term that has been applied to these retreats.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Peter Recognizes His Lord. Matt. 16: 17-20. Many saw in Jesus the prophet, teacher and wonder-worker, just as today practically everybody acknowledges him to have been the greatest character in history; it is the God-given insight to recognize him as the Christ.

Tuesday. Christ Commends Peter. Matt. 16: 17-20. It is submitted that Peter was speaking as the representative, was the mouthpiece, of the Twelve. But why didn't they all speak up? Everyone should be a mouthpiece, before Christ.

Wednesday. Peter Rebuked. Matt. 16: 21-25. Satanic is an awful word; yet Jesus applies it to the man who tempts

According to Luke (9:18) he had been engaged in prayer, a little apart from his companions; then, moved doubtless by something that he had been settling in his prayer, he turns to them with the significant question. It is their opinion he is seeking, but he asks it indirectly, "Who do people say that I am?" Answering a question sometimes strengthens conviction.

He had been teaching and training the Twelve for a considerable time now. He knows that they have gained a fairly clear understanding of his message and the Kingdom he was inaugurating. But their service, their value to him as his representatives, especially after he shall go away, will be dependent upon their faith.

The Lesson Before Us

I. HOW OTHERS VIEWED JESUS

Coasts in older English could be used without reference to the sea. R. V. has "parts"; all modern versions, "district" (cf. 1 Sam. 5:6, "Ashdod and the coasts thereof"). Caesarea Philippi was at the foot of Mount Hermon, twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee. When Philip the Tetrarch rebuilt it he added to its name his own, to distinguish it from Caesarea on the Mediterranean.

"Son of man." In what sense does Jesus apply to himself this term? It has Messianic associations (cf. Dan 7:13), but he evidently intends it to stress the nature of man, that he took upon himself. Observe the antithesis in Peter's "Sun of God."

The popular opinions of Jesus and the disciples' report are disheartening, pathetic. Some thought that was John the Baptist come to life—this supposition worried Herod the Tetrarch (Luke 9:7); and of course there were things in Jesus' preaching that reminded people of John. Others who took Jesus seriously thought that he might be Elijah (the Latin form of the name is Elias) redivivus, for it was supposed that he would be the forerunner of the Messiah (cf. Matt. 11:4; Mal. 4:5).

At this time Jeremiah was the most venerated of all the prophets, and he too was expected—to restore the sacred utensils that had been lost when the temple was destroyed (2 Mac. 2:4-7).

"Or one of the prophets." There was much confusion of opinion as to the circumstances of the Messiah's approach, some thinking there would be a series of forerunners (cf. Matt. 11:3).

It will be noticed that they, the people, did not take Jesus himself to be the Messiah; or only a few—"an occasional Messianic cry wrung from the admiration of the multitude." Jesus had not forced the issue. To see, to know him for what he is, the Christ of God, is something that may not be forced. Man must take that faith into his mind and heart as he does breath into his lungs (vs. 17).

II. WHAT THE TWELVE THOUGHT

Jesus' first interrogation (vs. 18) is merely introductory, leading up to the one he put to the Twelve. He will not have been particularly interested in what "the multitudes" thought of him; but Peter, and James, and John and the rest—"Who say ye that I am?" The "ye" is emphatic, very emphatic, in the original.

Repeatedly the Twelve—and Peter not least—show how difficult it was for them to get away from the more general and popular view and accommodate themselves to Jesus' teaching that the Kingdom that he was ushering in was to be a spiritual one, and he a king in a far different sense than their David had been, or Herod, or than the emperor at Rome was. Many a word about this will he have spoken during that teaching jaunt up there in the North.

Now he knows that they understand (not perfectly, to be sure, for there is a whole lot to be learned yet; in a different—and for him awful—school). But he will hear them say so; for statement always clarifies and clinches belief. He addresses his question to Simon Peter, perhaps as leader, perhaps because this disciple had been slower than the others to get away from gross Messianic views.

III. PETER'S CONFESSION

We are to understand Peter's answer in the light of Jesus' own conception of his Messiahship. When he says, "Thou art the Anointed," he puts into his words a fullness and depth of meaning that they would have had for none of the multitude and not many of Jesus' followers. It was a confession so full of content that the Master could say, Hereupon I establish the outward expression of my Kingdom. He had now a suitable foundation for his church (vs. 18 and Mark 8:18). Moreover, he saw now that they were prepared to receive further teaching.

Our Lord's confidence in the sincerity of Peter's statement is attested by his assurance that the apostle had gained this conviction not from others, perhaps not even entirely from his, the Master's, instruction, but was something that through God's spirit he himself had worked out.

The caution that they should not go to proclaiming his Messiahship (vs. 21) is explained by his unwillingness at this time to be distracted by popular efforts to make him a revolutionary leader. It would have been to no purpose. The officials of the nation had rejected him, and the people had little use for his kind of a reign.

IV. ROCK—REBUKED

Christ has to work with human materials. From the human point of view, Simon at this time is scarcely a full-fledged Peter; but Jesus from the confession deems him sufficiently a Rock to be the beginning, the first man, the

foundation of his church. And naturally there was to be a church, a human organization, a collective body, in which his gospel could be incorporated and his salvation made operative.

Inwrought into the very spirit of his gospel and accordingly into the very heart of his church is self-sacrifice. Peter is among the few who have sensed the Godsonship of Jesus, but he isn't yet free of the popular materialistic idea of the church that Jesus is founding. Jesus' picture of it (vs. 21) contradicts his expectations and is repugnant to him. God's Messiah, Christ.

The assertion of self in the face of the right and duty and the heavenly Father's will was evidently to Jesus the most hateful, sinful thing conceivable. God's way, his way, the way marked out for his church, was the way of the cross. To suggest going any other way is to speak with Satan's voice. It is a generous impulse that stirs Peter, and we may not too severely condemn him; nevertheless, when he argues for the false kingdom rather than the true, he must be rebuked, just as he is gloriously distinguished when he makes his brave confession.

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ From what Gospel data may we infer that Jesus' commendations did not give Peter a swelled head—nor his rebukes discourage him?
- ¶ In what ways does our Saviour today command or rebuke his disciples?
- ¶ Consider the difference that it makes to you, to every man, how this question is answered.
- ¶ What events in his intercourse with Jesus may have helped to convince Peter that here was indeed the divine Messiah, Christ?
- ¶ Have you ever felt that it was Satan who was speaking to you out of the mouth of some friend or companion?
- ¶ A leader of the liberal Jews has declared that "Jesus is the most popular member of the human race, of all time." And a great thinker of India said to E. Stanley Jones, "There seems to be no one else bidding for the heart of the world. There is no one else on the field." Why would not these verdicts satisfy Christ when he asks, "Who am I?"
- ¶ What does Jesus mean when he speaks of life? What does the "man on the street" mean? What interpretation do you give to the term?
- ¶ Have you had to sacrifice many things to be a Christian?

Notes and Comments

For all his later falling from grace, Simon Peter will ever afterward have been a better disciple because of this confession. We can hardly overestimate the value of such positive profes-

sions of faith. Nor can such statements be too strongly put: "Very God of very God," of the Nicene Creed, for example.

Peter's great confession was not made for the church once and for all. The issue has to be faced in every generation. Never since Peter's day has there been more of vital, inescapable challenge in the Lord's two great questions, the one undoubtedly placed deliberately over against the other by way of testing: "Who say the multitudes that I am?" "Who say ye that I am?" Never has the world been more concerned with categorizing Jesus Christ. Never has there been a wider divergence of solutions to the attempt.—*Olive Woodward Ogg.*

Messiah is the Hebrew word for "the anointed." It occurs in only one place in our Old Testament, Daniel 9: 25,

26, but its translation, "the anointed"—"his anointed," "the Lord's anointed" is constantly found. The Greek form of Messiah is Christos (from the verb *chrío*, "to anoint"), Christ. We are literally correct when we substitute "the Messiah," or "the anointed," for Christ in reading the New Testament. Torrey makes Peter reply to Jesus here "The Anointed of God."

The Church of Rome is supposed to be founded upon this confession of Peter's. (Around the interior of the dome of Saint Peter's in huge mosaic letters, are the words of Matthew 16: 18.) Our Protestant criticism of Rome is that she places all the emphasis upon Peter. To the Protestant the greater part of the emphasis should be on Christ, or on Peter's confession.

emphases undermine our faith in our Lord, if we acquiesce in any current apostasy, what better are we than those who by rejection after rejection forced upon Jesus the conclusion "that the Jews as a whole never could become a Messianic nation?" (Dr. Thomas C. Hall in *The Messages of Jesus*).

In the Montreal, Quebec *Standard* for Saturday, September 17, I read a delightful sermon. It appeared under the caption, "Sunday in the Home: A Time for Meditation." The text was Matthew 19: 16. The subject was "A Hopeful Young Gentleman." Here are (1) a significant question; (2) a searching requirement; (3) a sorrowful refusal. Now these factors are with us today as always. The question and the requirement remain. What is our answer? Do we stand with Peter?

The second recorded incident in our lesson shows that Peter, though he had a high conception of the purpose of the Messiah, had a low conception of the Messiah's ideals and methodology. The passion as foretold by Jesus was too much for Peter. He was thinking on the plane of men and not on the plane of God. As in the case of the rich young ruler who went on the run to Jesus and walked away sorrowful because he was not ready for self-surrender, so Peter rose to sublimity in declaring the Messiahship of Jesus and fell in contemplating sacrifice and suffering as concomitants of discipleship. "If anyone wants to go with me, he must disregard himself and take his cross and follow me." (Goodspeed.)

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

THE PLACE OF COMMENDATION AND REBUKE

If we look at the Scripture reference closely we see that Peter was commended for being sure of the place of Christ. Students of theology have wrestled with that problem ever since they began to study the life of the Master. The brief time allotted to a Sunday morning class is not sufficient to indulge in arguments concerning the divinity of Christ. Let us therefore take the more practical side of this incident and discuss the question with our classes: Are you sure that you know Christ? How did this knowledge come to you? Was it from other people's opinions or did you get the assurance from the Father in heaven? The Christian church is still builded out of people who are sure of Christ. They still merit the word of commendation that Peter received.

Peter was rebuked for not believing that suffering was a needful part of Christ's life. We are even yet with all our Christian background prone to believe suffering is an evil. Jesus tells Peter plainly that it may please men to think so but it does not please God. I

Teachers' Helps

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

PETER COMMENDED AND REBUKED

We are going to have Peter with us for quite a while—all the first quarter of the year, in fact. This is good. We ought to learn much from him. He is so human. He is a two-fisted Christian. He makes mistakes. Who doesn't? He seems to be "see-sawing" his way along. His road is full of bumps, but he knows how to take them. He is as hard as nails. He is solid like the rock. Most of the time he is like that. Sometimes he seems to be soft as velvet. Occasionally a streak of "yellow" appears. All in all, he arrow-heads himself into the spot-light for deserved recognition. "Most men have one or more failures to their record in order that they may be a success." That quotation (I do not know who wrote it) is a garment cut closely to Peter's size.

I think also of Emerson's words as applicable:

"Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities creep in—forget them as much as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it well and serenely, and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense." It is fair to Peter, therefore, to put two incidents in the same lesson text. On the one hand he is commended by Jesus; on the other, he is rebuked by the Master.

There is a vast difference between Protestant interpretation and that by Catholics of the words as recorded in Matthew 16: 17, 18. It is not my function to dwell upon it. We take it to mean that Peter is a representative follower, the first in point of time, to whom is committed the establishment of the kingdom of God. There will be many others. The nation has refused Jesus as

the Christ, the Son of the living God. Peter and others are the nucleus around which will be nourished the principles and forces directed toward "loosing the chains of darkness and unbinding the prisoners of unrighteousness."

When Jesus asked his little band of followers, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" the answers were not at all satisfactory to the Master. Peter's confident, positive, unhesitating reply elicited great commendation. He saw more clearly than his associates. Peter's faith was not undermined by current opinion.

In my youth, evangelism was the keynote of Christianity. Moody, Gipsy Smith, Chapman and others were preaching the Word. The gospel is the same now as it was then. Emphases are far different. I have been impressed by an editorial of Dr. Mitchell Bronk as appearing in the October *ADULT LEADER*.

"We are not yet out of a generation that has witnessed a striking change in men's understanding of what the gospel of Christ is and how it is to be preached and lived. Phillips Brooks is still pretty much alive. In my student days it was his sermons above all others that we theologs read and studied. No one indeed can charge him with relegating religion to cloudland; he is practical enough; but his beautiful, inspiring sermon essays reveal little of what we today think of as social vision."

In a following paragraph, Dr. Bronk writes:

"It is not long ago that there was endless discussion as to the meaning of the term 'kingdom of God'—for which we pray in the Model Prayer. It has broadened Christianity and the church's task that now there is a general consensus that that Kingdom includes all life and all of life."

I agree fully with that interesting comment. If changed conditions and changed

cannot believe that Jesus meant to say that God enjoys seeing his own Son or his spiritual children suffer. Not at all. What Jesus does say is that suffering is a part of the discipline of life. God knows this to be true. Men try to deny it. If Jesus did not need this discipline for himself then God gave it to him to teach us the importance of suffering.

The region where the writer lives has very recently passed through a devastating storm. Hurricanes seldom visit New England. No one ever remembers them because they come here about once in one hundred and fifty years. Tidal waves are almost unknown here and yet a thirty-foot wave rolled in at high tide with the gale. Big trees that we took so much pride in toppled over like dominoes. Summer resorts were ruined or washed away entirely. Church steeples fell. Hundreds lost their lives. Destruction and death stalked unheralded through this quiet section of shore and countryside. Why? This question is on the lips of many. I do not believe that God who takes so long to grow a tree would ever ruthlessly destroy it. Neither can I believe that our loving heavenly Father enjoys seeing us suffer loss and bereavement. And yet he knows there is value in the discipline the suffering brings. Now we know what hurricanes and tidal waves do in other parts of the world. We know from experience.

It may be daring to use an illustration from current political history because by the time this is used we may know more than we do now about the facts back of the recent decisions that have avoided war in central Europe, but I do want to pass on to you something a thoughtful old man said in our prayer-meeting a

week ago. He said something like this, referring to Czechoslovakia: "We are likely to take a pitying attitude toward this little country and feel sorry for her. I do not see why we should. Czechoslovakia is not to be pitied. These people have had the great honor of suffering that the peace of the world might be maintained. Suffering for others is not something which merits pity. I remember that Jesus suffered for others."

A man visited the great steel mills of Minnesota. He saw the pig-iron (made from ore he had seen mined on the iron range) go through the puddling process until it came to the huge furnaces, which were so hot and so glaring that the man could look at them only with eyes covered with blue goggles. He said it was painful just to think of the heat. . . But at the other end of the mill the visitor saw the steel being turned into railroad rails to carry the mail, food, clothes and friends in safety. He also saw nails being turned out to use in building homes and wire fences made to enclose cattle ranches. In other words he saw the beauty and blessedness of the ordeals as well as the blistering experience through which the iron passed. The heat did not create the steel. The iron was already there. But it was changed by the process. Most of us shrink like Peter from the vision of suffering either for ourselves or for those we love. We need like Peter to be told that suffering is a part of the necessary discipline of life. It will make us more sympathetic, more like Christ (if we accept it in the right way), bring us opportunities of usefulness we might never know otherwise, and help us to grow in love, knowledge and understanding of the kind Father of Jesus' teaching.

The Lesson Illustrated

LET CHRISTIANS CONFESS CHRIST

I do not believe there is any false religion in the world that men are not proud of. The only religion of which I have ever heard, that men were ashamed of, is the religion of Jesus Christ. Some time ago I preached two weeks in Salt Lake City, and I did not find a Mormon that was not proud of his religion. When I came within forty miles of Salt Lake City, the engineer came into the car and wanted to know if I would like to ride on the engine. I went with him, and in that forty-mile ride he talked Mormonism to me the whole time, and tried to convert me. I never met an unconverted Chinaman who wasn't proud of being a disciple of Confucius; and I never met a Mohammedan who wasn't proud of the fact that he was a follower of Mohammed; but how many, many times I have found men ashamed of the religion of Jesus Christ, the only religion that gives men the power over their affections and lusts and sins.—D. Moody.

A LEGENDARY REBUKE OF PETER

A few days before his execution, in Rome, it is said that he bribed the jailer and escaped from prison (the Mamertine prison). But when he reached a point outside the Porta San Sabestiano (now marked by a chapel) the Lord Christ appeared to him, bearing a cross. Peter asked in surprise, "Lord, whither goest thou?" (*Domine, quo vadis?*) Christ answered him, "I go to Rome to be crucified again." Peter turned about deeply humbled, and delivered himself to the jailer, to be crucified—head downward—unworthy of Jesus' way.

Lesson 3. January 15

PETER SEES CHRIST'S GLORY; OR THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF PRAYER

Matt. 17: 1-18; 2 Peter 1: 16-18. (Verses printed, Matt. 17: 1-9, 14-18)

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D.D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Revelation 1: 12-18

KEY VERSE: We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.—John 1: 14

1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold

a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for of times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. On the Mount with Christ. Luke 9: 28-36. The "high place" has always figured largely in religion. Men have instinctively felt that on the mountaintop they were near to God. The Christian knows that he could not be higher than with Christ.

Tuesday. Eye Witnesses of His Majesty. 2 Peter 1: 16-18. We must be ever seeking ways in which we too may be in holy mounts where that Christ Jesus is.

Wednesday. The Father's Witness. John 8: 12-20. We see how everything that he did was in harmony with the Father's will, and that his every word was an echo of that Father's word; thus he was completely one with the God Father.

Thursday. The Vision of the Glorified. Rev. 1: 9-18. Are you so much of a Christian that your tribulations (vs. 9) transport you to a Patmos where you get new revelations of Christ's truth and of his glory?

Friday. Vision and Task. Luke 9: 33, 37-43. Difficult and irksome would be many of the tasks that my Lord sets for me, did I not have these mountaintop experiences to assure me that that Lord is indeed the Christ of God.

Saturday. The Power of Prayer. Matt. 14: 22-32. "Bid me come unto thee on the water!" What a beautiful prayer is that. Yet when we are out on life's storm-tossed waters how else can we pray?

Sunday. The Perfect Prayer. Luke 11: 1-4. "When ye pray, say, 'Our Father.'" That is a whole prayer in itself—when we can put all the meaning into the word Father that Jesus did. So to address God confesses, pleads, asks and adores.

At the Threshold of the Lesson

The subtitle of this lesson is "Prayer." We should note the statement found in the accounts of Mark and Luke, that it was for prayer that Jesus took Peter, James and John to the mountain.

These three apostles were to be leaders, and Jesus realized how important it was that they should be strengthened beforehand with the power that contact with the heavenly Father in prayer brings. There was the other and more obvious reason for the mountaintop vigil: they should have implicit belief in his Godsonship. This the experience must have given them.

It is a delicate matter to approach the inner life of Jesus, but may we not believe that he himself had a particular need of this experience, as a reparation, a strengthening, for the awful end? It will have meant much to him, to hear again the voice from heaven, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" (cf. Mark 1: 11.) It gave strength and encouragement.

The Lesson Before Us

Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9 tell of the Transfiguration in almost identical language. It is assumed that Matthew and Luke have taken over the narrative of Mark, the basic Gospel.

I. THE OCCASION

Jesus had just spoken those plain words that disabused his followers of their hope that he was the Messiah popularly expected; telling them that his way was henceforth to be an ignominious one, leading to a cross, and that to go on with him would mean the loss of much that the world holds dear. It was a trying time for him, for many who had professed his discipleship were turning away (John 6: 66); and it was a trying time for the Twelve, who were hesitating between doubt and loyalty.

So for their encouragement and reassuring, and the strengthening of their faith in him as the true God-sent Son of God, they get this vision of the glory that was his. Peter, James and John would in time tell the others about it; and so it would be passed on to the whole church.

It is a common experience of the life of faith that in the critical hour God rarely fails to give us these mountaintop revelations in new visions of himself. They come to us in various forms; in words that we hear or read; in prayer; in the solemn quiet hour. They may be as precious to us as they were to Peter and John—who long after fondly dwell upon the event of that holy night; the one in his letter (2 Peter 1: 16-18), the other in his Gospel (1: 14).

II. THE MOUNTAIN

It was evidently one of the lesser peaks of the Hermon range, in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. A very old tradition, which is still accepted by the Greek and Roman churches, made it Mount Tabor, in lower Galilee. But at this time Jesus had left Galilee; the Transfiguration is always associated with Peter's confession, made in the northern country; and, finally, a fortified city occupied the summit of Mount Tabor in Jesus' day.

III. THE TRANSFIGURATION

"And as he prayed" (Luke 9: 29). Wonderful praying it must have been thus to effect his transfiguration and bring down to that mountaintop a piece of heaven! Prayer opens the eyes of the soul to many of our deepest, most heavenly experiences.

The appearance of the Transfigured would be beyond the power of human language to describe; the evangelists can only attempt it. Torrey has, "the expression of his face changed," in verse 2. "Glistening," "exceeding white," "dazzling," "white as the light," can only suggest the splendor of what they saw (cp. Rev. 1: 13ff.), which was prophetic of a still more splendid glory (John 17: 5).

Moses, the founder of the law, and Elijah, the great reforming prophet, are always linked in Jewish literature. It was supposed that they were to come, together, in the reign of the Messiah. Notice that here law, prophecy and the fulfilled gospel are united.

IV. PETER'S PROPOSAL

Just what did Peter mean? (Vs. 4.) We are told that he did not know what to answer (Mark 9: 6), that is to say, so "awe-struck" (Mrs. Montgomery) were they. Jesus had been telling them of the cross that was looming so inevitably. He and his heavenly visitors had also been discussing the same matter. Peter feels that it would be pleasant to stay there on the quiet mountain. "Let us do it, Lord, and keep away from your enemies and hostile Jerusalem!" It is the natural human desire to avoid the disagreeable, to keep out of trouble, which characterizes lots of Christians besides Peter.

Peter's remark about the three tabernacles—booths of leaves and branches—is perhaps cryptic. Or he may mean that if booths for Moses and Elijah are raised, it will hold them; their spiritual presence will abide. "And one booth will be for you, Master; we others can sleep in the open air." The whole experience is so delightful and inspiring to Peter that he cannot bear to have it pass.

V. THE VOICE

Any such thought—of avoiding the cross—Jesus has put behind his back. The charm and peace of such a "feast of Tabernacles" as Peter proposed are not for him; not for his followers. The Father's satisfaction in this steadfastness of purpose on Jesus' part is expressed in the voice from out the cloud. The disciples, moreover, in this heavenly testimony receive a confirmation of their faith in Jesus as the divine Son of God; just as Jesus' own consciousness of that Sonship had been strengthened by the same voice and word at his baptism.

The injunction to silence, on their way down the mountain (vs. 9 and Mark 9: 9)—Luke simply tells that they kept quiet about the event—is in accordance with Jesus' uniform unwillingness to have his work interrupted by the excitement and violence that a public recognition of his Messiahship at this time would have occasioned.

VI. THE HELPLESSNESS OF THE FAITHLESS

The scene at the foot of the mountain affords a fitting climax—or anticlimax—to the Transfiguration. Phillips Brooks built up one of his most famous sermons around this contrast. A disillusioning sequel it was for Peter and his companions. We should not miss the point: The vision of the glory of the divine Christ and the ecstasy of that wonderful experience are only one side

of the Christian gospel; the other is, the need and suffering of humanity in the presence of that gospel—and the pitifully small faith of men, even of Jesus' helpers.

These two pictures, taken together, have always been a rebuke to the church when it has cherished a one-sided view of the Christian life. Mountaintop experiences are blessed, and needful—alas! for Christian lives that never have them—but they may not be expected to last very long. They are a schooling for service, a vacationtime of spiritual reinvigoration, a preparation for the cross journey. The three must have been better prepared to go on with the Master than they had been before.

These mountain experiences are also a hint and foregleam of what we shall witness when we get to be forever with our Lord. "The vision of the holy mount is a precious pledge that glorious things are in store for the people of God" (Bishop Ryle). Let us have belief and faith in the future life!

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ Relate, "as he prayed," and "the fashion of his countenance was altered" (Luke 9:29). Should not prayer always do something like this to us?
- ¶ How "elevating," to be thought of as mountaintop experiences, are the worship services of your church? What music, or hymns, produce for you this effect?
- ¶ How much permanent influence do you think this mountaintop experience had upon the three disciples?
- ¶ What can we do to make permanent, or at any rate more lasting, our lofty and deep religious experiences?
- ¶ Can you suggest classes, or types, of people in church history, or in the

church of today, who insist upon building tabernacles on the mountain and staying there? Why do they wish to do this?

¶ When we say that lack of faith made the Twelve fail to heal the epileptic, what do we mean? If lack of faith makes us unable to do things, what do we mean by that? What can we do to remedy this?

¶ May we assume that they had depended upon their own power to heal the boy, had neglected to invoke their Master's name and power? Give your reasons for your answer.

Notes and Comments

"If we are to see anything of the glory of Christ, or of Christ in his glory, we must go apart with Christ."—*A. B. Davidson.*

The most precious fact of this whole narrative is contained in verse 36. Jesus did not fade away into the cloud with Moses and Elijah; nor has he ever disappeared from human faith-sight. "Jesus . . . alone." But it is enough that we have him—"Till we grow lucid with thy presence bright."

"Every mountaintop of privilege is girded by vales of lowly duty."—*Henry van Dyke.*

In verse 20, Jesus attributes the impotency of the disciples to do what he did to sheer lack of faith, and in the parallel in Mark (9:23) faith is made the condition of his help. He takes the words out of the father's mouth: "If thou canst?" Why do you say that? It is a question not of my power, but of your faith." Not many of us—or not often—doubt God's ability to do the things we ask; it is his willingness rather in which we disbelieve.

"The mount for vision—but below
The paths of daily duty go."—*Whittier.*

Teachers' Helps

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

PETER SEES CHRIST'S GLORY

Today is September the twenty-eighth. By the time this is read by you, I hope war news will be as stale as old dish-water. Comment on current events in relation to the theme of a lesson is virtually precluded by calendar space. There has been, however, such close watching for radio announcements, together with apprehension about war and fervent hope for peace, that I seem unable to keep my typewriter keys away from the most important subject.

After all, it is quite pertinent to point to the obvious contrast between Jesus and his group of selected disciples on the hilltop in communion with God, and the feverish conferences participated in by

Chamberlain, Hitler, Daladier and others. If the spirit of our Master animated the hearts and minds of all the statesmen of Europe, would there be possibility of bloody carnage in the utilization of the most ghastly and horrible instruments of destruction ever devised by human beings? Taking the existing situation into account, it seems to me it is not straining much to view Peter's wonderful experience, with its peace and glory and quietude, as a rebuke to those who would set man against man and nation against nation. Surely it is a peace picture in the most beautiful and significant sense of that restful, hopeful, lovely word.

The radio commentator said of Neville Chamberlain as he stood before the House of Commons at its opening today: "He is an older man than he was two

weeks ago when he flew to Bavaria. The commentator referred to the chaplain's prayer. "Normally," said he, "the prayer is something of a routine matter and is taken as a matter of course. It is different today. The prayer of the chaplain is clothed, shall I say, with dramatic solemnity." Those words impressed me deeply as they were reproduced over the air for listeners around the world. Likewise was I impressed by the words of the English Prime Minister a day or two ago, when in a public address he thanked citizens of many nations, including Germany, for their words of encouragement as sent to him, including their statement that they were adding their prayers to his for avoidance of war. Men, Christianity is not dead. The spirit of our Lord is moving in the hearts of men. Righteousness yet shall prevail. Let us pause to see Christ's glory as Peter saw it on the mount. We need occasional repose. Our business needs it. The idea of a "retreat" as practised by certain Catholic orders is one we would do well to put into practice. Away from the world for a little time, that we may go back to our duties with renewed faith and fortitude. The Transfiguration, then, in addition to sealing the glory of Christ is the prototype of peace and power.

The European representative of the Columbia Broadcasting System referred to the meeting scheduled for tomorrow (September 29) as one that would require the use of three languages—German, French and English. Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier will be there. There is one common language that all these leaders need to speak and understand. That language is the language of Him who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"; "I am come that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly"; "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The Transfiguration marks a turning point in the ministry of our Lord. Virtually rejected by the Jews, he now turns to the world at large. His mission broadens and deepens. He wants to be recognized, not as the miracle-worker but as the Saviour and Redeemer. Let us not therefore miss the significance of the miraculous event. Jesus brings the message of salvation to all people.

It is not strange that the three disciples were afraid in the presence of the unusual vision. Their minds and hearts had much to grasp.

The staggering conception of the leader, their Jesus, is likewise overpowering to us today who listen to the voice from the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The admonition from the cloud, "Hear ye him," is for us. Do we hear it? Do we take it? Do we believe it? Do we follow it?

After the experience was all passed they lifted up their eyes and "they saw no one, save Jesus only."

Would to God that in the turmoil of the world, this harassed, buffeted, complicated world, we too lift up our eyes and see no one save Jesus only. Civilization—what is it? Social progress—what is there any such thing? The kingdom of God—what is that? The kingdom is life permeated with the spirit of Jesus Christ. The world, men, will go forward in the love, righteousness, justice and acceptance of the eternal principles exemplified in him of whom it is written, "He was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." It will go backward in hate, reprisals, sin, selfishness, and the carnage of war.

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

PETER SEES CHRIST'S GLORY OR THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF PRAYER

Just a week after the experiences given for our lesson of last week, when Peter was rebuked for not wanting a violent death to come to Jesus, he (Peter) was one of three to have a share in one of the intimate glories of the life of Jesus, his transfiguration. Luke says that Jesus did not go to the mount to be transfigured, but to pray. There was a cloud of God but the glory in Jesus' face come from within. Many of us have seen in a small way how a person's face is lighted when stirred by some deep spiritual emotion.

To Jesus the Transfiguration was a help for the trials just ahead of him. Sometimes it is harder to look forward to something that we are almost sure is going to happen than to endure the experience when it actually comes. God knew that Jesus needed reassurance. He gave it to him in the Transfiguration, in the garden when an angel ministered to

him, and again on the cross. Will a loving Father do less for his needy children? Let us remember this when our friends are apprehensive in looking forward to trials and pray that God will send special help to them. In connection with this let us remember that prayer does not always ward off trouble and death. It did not for Jesus and it will not for many of his followers. Prayer and the divine help which comes in response to prayer makes trouble and sorrow bearable. We can have the experience of being victorious in them if not from them.

It is easy to imagine that Jesus would have been very glad to return to heaven with Moses and Elijah when he had talked with them on that Mount Hermon mountain. Moses and Elijah went away and left him. Jesus must go back to the world of men with their troubles. We often feel we would like to get away from it all but God gives us the same answer: No, there is work for you to do here.

Teachers and pupils will find very interesting Peter's thoughts on this experience long years afterward. He has written them down in his second letter. In the first chapter (vss. 12-15) he says and repeats that he will do his utmost to get them to remember the truths he has taught them. He impresses the value of repetition of religious truth. Sometimes we say we are tired of hearing the same passages of the Bible read again and again from the pulpit and hearing the preacher repeat great religious truths. Peter says we need it. He did not want people to forget and so he wrote them down. Is there not a suggestion in this? Will not our friends remember longer some testimony for Christ we may wish to give if we write it down? Spoken words are easily forgotten but written ones can be read again and again if they

are worth reading. Some persons can write a testimony to some one to whom they wish to interest better than they can speak it. Peter's words give encouragement for such a practice.

Peter and the other two with him on the Mount of Transfiguration were forbidden to talk about their experience at the time. But they did not forget it. They used it afterward. We can treasure our mountaintop experiences and use them afterward to help others.

The Lesson Illustrated

APART WITH CHRIST

At a conference a young minister who had been in Palestine took every chance he could to tell about what he saw there. It got to be quite a nuisance. At last his bishop got up and said, "Brother, I would rather be five minutes with Christ, than to be five years where he has been."

FACING GODWARD

In the old myth, Orion, whose eyes had been put out whilst he slept on the seashore, recovered sight by gazing toward the rising sun. If our inner vision has been blinded, and all the grand truths and hopes of life lost to sight, let us turn our blind faces toward heaven and keep them there, until he who looseth the bands of Orion turns for us the shadow of death into the morning.—*W. L. Watkinson.*

WERE YOU REALLY THERE?

When a man boasted to D. L. Moody that for five years he had been living continually on a mount of transfiguration, the great evangelist inquired how many souls he had led to Christ during the year past. When he replied, "None, as far as I know," Mr. Moody's rejoinder was, "Well, we don't want any of that kind of mountaintop experience."

Lesson 4. January 22

PETER DENIES HIS LORD; OR MEETING UNEXPECTED TEMPTATION

Luke 22: 31-34, 54-62

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D.D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 51: 1-10

KEY VERSE: Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—1 Cor. 10: 12

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

54 Then took they him, and led him,

and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilæan.

60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. The Evening of the Denial. Luke 22:14-30. Even intimate association with our Lord will not ensure faithfulness to him, unless the soul is forever on its guard ("The battle ne'er give o'er").

Tuesday. Peter's Denial Foretold. Luke 22:31-34. Because our Lord knows us—how weak we are—and Satan, how crafty he is, he cannot but be apprehensive about us. But he restores and forgives us, as he did Peter.

Wednesday. Peter's Rashness. John 18:1-11. We all say, "Good for you, Peter!" Nevertheless, Jesus' way is best—also for us.

Thursday. Peter Denies His Lord. Luke 22:54-62. Those words, "followed afar off," are meaningful. It undoubtedly would have been dangerous for him to keep close to Jesus—but undoubtedly it would have saved him from that shameful denial. The moral—for us—is very evident.

Friday. Denying Our Lord Today. Luke 22:46-49. It is possible, yes easy, to do it, because that Lord is still in our world speaking, teaching, leading—along ways of the cross.

Saturday. Christ Sympathizes with the Tempted. Heb. 4:12-16. We must, however, get beyond the idea of sympathy, precious as that is; with him there is "help in time of need" (vs. 16) and that after all is what we want.

Sunday. "It Is the Lord." John 21:1-14. This time Peter's impetuosity is delightful to witness: If it is the Master, I don't care! "Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go."

At the Threshold of the Lesson

Overconfidence was Peter's great weakness. We remember his venturing to walk the water. Like too many of us he fell because he was overconfident of his own strength, when he should have relied more on God. People who boast of being good swimmers frequently drown. "Be humble, or you'll stumble."

Paul had the right idea (1 Cor. 10:12). How significant Peter's word, in the Second Epistle (3:17), "beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Thomas Fuller said that "Fear to fall and assurance to stand are two sisters." Stand firm; trust in the Lord for help.

The Lesson Before Us

I. THE DENIAL FORETOLD Luke 22:31-34

To sense the full shame of Peter's denial we must go to the breaking up of the Last Supper gathering, where Jesus had foretold the flight of his little flock when the blow should fall—as it was about to fall—upon him, the Shepherd (Luke 22:31-34; Matt. 26:31-35;

Mark 14:27-31). Goodspeed renders Jesus' word, "You will all desert me." And then he quotes a prophetic word of Zechariah's (13:7): "O sword, against my shepherd! . . . smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." "Not I," objects Peter, "even though all the rest do. Why, I am ready to go with you to prison or death." It was a hearty, brave declaration, characteristic of the apostle. And it must in a certain way have pleased our Lord—with reservations. We can imagine him shaking his head, dubiously, regretfully.

He knew his friend too well. So once more he foretells—the foreswearing that was so soon to follow, to shame Peter, and give the lie to his boasting. This was the point where Peter should have held himself up. But no, he repeats his boast, and in stronger terms (Mark 14:31).

Peter's impetuosity will carry him into base denial, but the prayers of his Master will be his salvation. There is nothing cryptic about verses 31, 32. The meaning is: Satan has his winnowing fan; he has fanned Judas away from me, and now he wants to get you; but he shall not, for you are not chaff—like Judas—and so my praying can keep you from going lost (cf. 1 Peter 5:8, "Your adversary the devil"). We think of the lines of the hymn:

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned
for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his
foes.

"That thy faith fail not!" has the sense "fail not utterly," or "finally." "When thou art converted" (vs. 32): not in the theological sense, but, "when thou art turned back into the right way, as I know you will be." The very common human nature of this man Peter makes him peculiarly competent to "strengthen" brethren (cf. John 21:17; also 1 Peter 5:10).

II. "FOLLOWED AFAR OFF." Luke 22:54

The high priest was Caiaphas (term of office A. D. 18-36); son-in-law of Annas. John (18:12ff.) tells of a preliminary hearing before Annas. The council was made up of seventy-one members, in imitation of the ancient council of elders (Num. 11:16). Its meeting-place was evidently the house occupied by both Annas and Caiaphas: the high priestly palace.

Peter's timidity—"followed him afar off"—has been attributed to a fear of punishment for his attack on the servant of the high priest. He showed considerable courage in following Jesus at all, under the circumstances. Only, we wish that he'd followed him close up, instead of afar off. The "afar off" follower of Christ is always liable to defection. "His presence at the trial was an act of loyalty; his denial a weakness of the flesh, that Jesus had foreseen" (Hillyer H. Straton).

III. "BASE DENIAL." Vss. 55-62

"As he sat by the fire." Jerusalem is 2,500 feet above sea-level; the spring night would be chilly and the braziers fire acceptable.

Though there were only three denials, we may assume that Peter was repeatedly charged with being one of Jesus' friends. The fire would make his face recognizable; his north country dress would betray him; and as soon as he opened his mouth, his Galilean accent (vs. 59, and Mark 14:70).

The twice-repeated denial becomes trebly hard to understand, explain or excuse. The deliberateness fairly shocks us. Was it fear that overcame him? Or just a momentary lack of faith in Jesus' cause and character? The Christian church has ever stood aghast in the face of the shame of it.

His cursing and swearing—"with curses and solemn oaths" (Mrs. Montgomery)—make matters worse (Mark 14:71); to say nothing of his disregard of the monition of the cock's first crowing. In many homes in Syria today the crowing of the family's rooster takes the place of a clock or watch.

IV. THE LOOK—AND THE REGRET Vss. 61, 62

Peter always comes to himself sooner or later. As he stands there in the vestibule, Jesus, through the open door of the council chamber, witnesses what takes place, sees and hears his chief apostle's shameful conduct. He thinks that Peter likewise saw Jesus at that very instant. And at the same time there came the fateful piping of the cock; which he was never to forget so long as he lived. Nor can we imagine him ever forgetting his Master's accusing, pitying look.

Satan did not get Peter, after all. He certainly was "sifted"; but the repentance of his bitter weeping restored him to a faithful discipleship; and he did indeed "strengthen many brethren." "Seeing that Peter was forgiven and became so useful, let him that knows he has fallen rise up in earnest repentance" (Bernard Weiss).

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ What sort of boasting is justifiable for the Christian?
- ¶ Mark out the steps that led up to Peter's denial.
- ¶ Note the popular origin of our expression "peter out." Yet it was Judas that petered out rather than Peter.
- ¶ Consider that Christ's followers speak his native language, his dialect. And the world easily recognizes it. We can't deny him without betraying ourselves. Do you talk "Galilean"—in your daily life and walk?
- ¶ We are told that Judas repented (Matt 27:3). How would his re-

penitence differ from Peter's? Mention some mistaken ideas that prevail among people in regard to repentance.

¶ What are some of the ways in which Christians today deny Christ? You would not put "ashamed of Jesus" among those reasons, would you?

¶ Does the fact that Peter's denial was in words mitigate its shamefulness? Who would be the greater sinner, a church member who should deny that he was, or one who unhandedly committed some sin? Give your reasons for such an answer.

Notes and Comments

"Before we upbraid Peter too strongly we would better ask ourselves whether we may not be, at least by our conduct, saying, 'I know not the man.'"—*Torrey*.

"No article of the Creed is so hard to believe as, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' But look at Peter. If I could paint a portrait of Peter, I would

write on every hair of his head, 'forgiveness of sins.'"—*Martin Luther*.

"The fall of Peter is a mirror of human infirmity, and a memorable example of God's goodness and compassion. Peter acted inconsiderately in entering the high priest's court. It was proper to follow the Master, but he had been warned of his coming defection and should have avoided the occasion. Conscientious weakness should not hinder us from going whithersoever God calls us; but it ought to restrain rashness and stimulate to prayer."—*John Calvin*.

"Many Christians are following Christ afar off. They have some faith, but are too timid or ashamed or fearful to come out and confess it. They want to see Jesus, but do not want to be seen with Jesus. Unfaithfulness in service puts a long distance between Christ and a great many Christians. We all lag far behind him in character and conduct, and we need to press forward until we come up close to him and can follow in his steps along the path of life."—*Snowden*.

Teachers' Helps

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

PETER DENIES HIS LORD

Peter denies his Lord. Yet his Lord prayed for him that his faith fail not. What does this mean—was the Lord's prayer for Peter not answered? Peter did deny his Lord. His faith, however, triumphed mightily in the end. So then, the prayer was answered.

Peter was a cock-sure sort of fellow. It is only natural, so it seems to me at least, that he and his associates could not bring themselves to accept the humiliation and suffering that Jesus rather cryptically referred to so many times. How could their beloved leader be at the mercy of misunderstanding accusers? He could perform miracles, could he not? Let us have charity as we think over the attitude of the disciples as they listen to such strange utterances by Jesus. When Jesus adds that they, in the presence of his accusers, will turn and run and desert him, it is just too much for the cock-sure Peter.

I do not care, Lord, what others do. I never will be disappointed in you. I have made my choice. I left my boat and nets and everything else behind. You are my master, teacher and leader. I love you, Lord. Please count on me as one who will be with you to the end. Prison?—I am ready to go to prison for you if necessary. Death?—I am ready to die for you, good master. Count on me, Lord. Depend on me. Use me for my service. I will be with you even to my bitter end. You know that, do you not, Lord?

This lesson must be intended to cause us to think of our own protestations of faith. I hope that you will not consider any of the following questions out of order:

1. If you are a church member, you pledged your faith in, and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you maintained that faith and service?

2. Your faith and service logically and naturally must express themselves in your social relationships. Have you been honest in dealing with your fellow men in your varied business affairs?

3. Do you pay your debts?

4. Are you selfish in your family life?

5. Do you ever "put yourself out" to help the weak or unfortunate?

6. Are you stingy?

7. Do you sulk?

8. Do you lie?

9. Do you have the nasty habit of turning reports about your neighbors into gossip for their hurt?

10. Do you abuse your health by bad habits?

11. Are you kind, decent, courteous and gentlemanly about the home?

12. Are you a grouch at the office, store or factory?

13. Are you a bluffer?

14. Do you face facts or run from them?

15. Do you try to love your enemies or do you revel in contempt for them? Do you carry a grudge?

16. Do you believe in meekness, forgiveness, charity?

Peter certainly meant well. The little affair in the court of the high priest's house took him entirely by surprise. A

maid recognized him, or thought she did, as one of the followers of their prisoner. In the uncertain light of the fire that had been built in the center of the court she quizzed him. "I tell you, woman, I do not know him." There is always someone around to put the question or make the statement that constitutes temptation. It was sudden and unexpected and Peter did not hold up. Let us not forget, however, that he did follow along to see what was going to happen to Jesus. Give Peter credit for that. So far as we know, the other disciples were too scared to go along with the procession.

When that historic rooster stirred himself on his perch and crowed, Peter remembered the prophecy of Jesus. "And he went out and wept bitterly." He had great confidence in himself, and possibly was given to a bit of boasting. His declaration of allegiance is admirable, I think. He made a denial. He repented, however, and went on to become a mighty force in the Kingdom.

There is a difference between self-confidence and self-reliance. Webster tells us that the former may be used in a good or bad sense, the latter only in a good sense. Peter's self-confidence sometimes bulged a bit. I like him just the same. Though he soared, he soon came down to the hard pan of reality.

A case of "big-head" has ruined many a potential hero. We have seen this happen with ball-players and aviators, actors, and religious workers. Let us be reliant, sincere and courageous.

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

PETER DENIES HIS LORD (MEETING UNEXPECTED TEMPTATION)

I have often wondered if the expression "cock-sure" came from the experience of Peter given in this lesson. A verse that seems to belong with this experience is "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Studying this passage recently I have been impressed with what Jesus told Peter in Luke 22:32, and with Peter's boast in the following verse. Jesus tells Peter his mission is to help his brethren. Peter entirely disregards that mission and brags that he is ready to go into prison and to death with Jesus. Here is one explanation of Peter's troubles. He had his eyes on another thing than the one Jesus told him was his mission in life.

One of the impressive scenes of the Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau is this very one reproducing Peter's experience the night of the arrest and trial of Jesus. We are greatly moved by the loneliness of Peter. Away from his friends, the other disciples, away from his Lord, he easily falls a victim to the temptation involved in the sneering remarks of the servants and hangers-on in the courtyard of the house of the high priest. Why

was Peter not with the others? Why was he not strengthening his brethren? That's the way to strengthen yourself.

Supposing we look to ourselves instead of using Peter for our alibi. Why are we not strengthening *our* brethren? How can we do it?

First. Be where they are. Members of churches and Bible school classes cannot do much for each other if they habitually stay away from services of worship, prayer meetings and Sunday school, unless sickness or some good reason is an excuse. A church officer was told that provision was about to be made for the care of the young children of his church during the hour of morning worship. His comment was, "Now we will not be able to make our children an alibi for not attending, will we?" Deep down in his heart he felt that they were an alibi rather than a reason and in an unguarded moment out it came!

Second. Measure up to your position of trust, the office you hold. Peter was, by common consent (not to say self-appointed) the leader of that group of disciples. Why was he not exercising his leadership ability and responsibility? It is a great opportunity to strengthen our brethren when we hold office in a trustworthy manner and dignify it with our best interest. Deacons and deaconesses, department superintendents and teachers, committee chairmen and secretaries, not to mention ministers, all help others when they do the work of their offices in a worthy manner.

Third. Hope ahead. Peter failed, but

he learned his lesson a little later. What a splendid "strengthener" he became. His experience has been a great inspiration for many who have fallen into lesser sins since. As we try to apply this lesson to our own members, let us emphasize the encouraging points rather than the others. Peter was bitterly sorry and confessed his sin and Jesus pitied him and forgave him. He will do the same for us. When he does, our hope for resisting temptation in the future comes largely from the same place Peter's did; that is, in doing the work given to us rather than attempting something we are not supposed to do. Helping other people is the grandest way to get ahead and keep straight ourselves.

The Lesson Illustrated

THE SIN OF STAYING IN

"If someone should fall from this pier into the water, would he be drowned?" an old boatman was asked. With a quizzical smile he answered: "No; it's not falling into the water that drowns a man." "What then is it?" "Staying there!"

SATAN WILL IF THE CHRISTIAN DOESN'T

The Confederate General Longstreet, during the battle of Gettysburg, had one of his generals come up to him and report that he was unable to bring up his men again so as to charge the enemy. "Very well," said the general sarcastically, "just let them remain where they are; the enemy's going to advance, and will spare you the trouble."

THREE TIMES AND—OUT?—NOT OUT?

Were those who challenged Peter in the high priest's house surprised at his response? I believe they were. People expect us to be loyal. They are surprised that we are not more intense in our convictions, and they put us down as cowards if we do not stand by our principles. Daniel A. Poling and a young man were standing near a group who were gambling, with some sort of device. The young man suggested that Dr. Poling try his luck. The doctor refused. The young man asked him again, offering to provide the small stake required. Again a refusal. Then Dr. Poling said, "You knew I wouldn't do that, didn't you?" "I didn't believe you would," he replied, "but I thought I'd try you out."

ACT THY CREED

Christian, rise, and act thy creed,
Let thy prayer be in thy deed;
Seek the right, perform the true,
Raise thy work and life anew.
Hearts around thee sink with care,
Thou canst help their load to bear;
Thou canst bring inspiring light,
Arm their faltering wills to fight.

KEEP ON GOD'S GROUND

The old shepherd who offered us prayer in a Welsh revival meeting described the position aptly when he lamented his backsliding in these words: "Lord, I got among the thorns and briars and was scratched, and torn, and bleeding. But, Lord, it is only fair to say that it was not on thy ground; I had wandered out of thy pasture!"

Lesson 5. January 29

PETER DECLARES HIS LOVE; PROVING OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST

John 21: 11-19

[This lesson written by Hillyer H. Straton, Th.D., Muncie, Indiana]

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Matthew 10: 34-42

KEY VERSE: If ye love me, keep my commandments.—John 14: 15

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the second

time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Peter Finds Forgiveness. Luke 24: 28-35. On the first Easter after the appearance to the women Jesus made a special appearance to Peter in order to forgive completely the disciple who had denied him three times.

Tuesday. Peter Confesses His Love. John 21: 15-17. Peter loved Jesus even though he denied him. His denial was a weakness of the flesh, his love was from the heart.

Wednesday. The Renewed Commission. John 21: 17-19. Jesus called Peter originally to become a fisherman. Now he commands Peter to feed sheep. The two tasks of the church are catching fish—evangelism, and feeding sheep—building up Christians in the faith.

Thursday. Peter Enjoins Devotion to Christ. 1 Peter 2:11-12. From his personal experience Peter knew the value of devotion to Christ. Complete consecration helps the Christian in overcoming temptation.

Friday. A Service of Love. Luke 7:36-50. Peter had seen Jesus forgive much in others. He knew Jesus had forgiven doubly much in himself. He was confident that Jesus would forgive all who requested forgiveness.

Saturday. The Greatest Thing in the World. 1 Corinthians 13. Paul could write this wonderful chapter because he knew what the love of Christ had done in his own life.

Sunday. Proving Our Love. John 15:12-21. Jesus proved his love for us by giving his life that we might be free from the law of sin and death. We must prove our love by our willingness to give for him.

At the Threshold of the Lesson

The following are the "lead paragraphs" from the writer's recently published book, "Peter, the Man Jesus Made":

There is something about the personality of Peter that strikes a sympathetic chord in the hearts of all men. His very faults and shortcomings place him upon familiar ground. Peter's character reflects as in a mirror our own impulsive vacillating and sinful natures. If he found forgiveness from the Man of Galilee after his terrible denial we too may have hope. The faults of Peter are our faults. He is a flesh-and-blood saint. The average man can understand this man who began life as a Jonas, a dove, and became a rock.

The achievements no less than the failures of Peter make him a figure that is very attractive. He started out as a rude Galilean fisherman, boisterous, bragging and blustering. He finished life crucified upside-down at his own request because he felt that he was not worthy to die like his Lord. From the self-centered fisherman to the Christ-centered apostle marks a spiritual advancement unsurpassed by any other.

In the realm of physical achievement Peter is outstanding. John was probably of priestly lineage and was certainly a man of some wealth. Paul, according to his own testimony, was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" as well as a free citizen of Rome. We look for and rightly expect advancement in their cases. It is different with Peter, who was just an ordinary Galilean peasant wresting a living from the lake by arduous toil. Entirely apart from his yeoman service in the early church Peter has become in the thinking of a vast branch of Christianity the founder of the Roman system and the first of the popes. Were it not for his own testimony that his power and strength came from Christ, Peter could well be considered the self-made man par excellence.

The Lesson Before Us

I. THE DRAUGHT OF FISH.

John 21:3-11. Compare Luke 5:3-7

In the fifth chapter of Luke we have recorded a miraculous draught of fish. Some Bible students believe that there was only one such occurrence, that Luke gives one version and John another. There are similarities in the two accounts but the differences force us to the conclusion that there were two different events.

One was clearly at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, the other happened after the resurrection. In Luke the nets broke, John distinctly says that the nets did not break. At the first miracle, Peter and his companions were so impressed by the superhuman knowledge of Jesus that "they forsook all and followed him." In this account they have long been disciples of Jesus.

Many sermons have been built around Peter's statement, "I go a-fishing." The gist of most of these is that Peter should have been at work for Christ instead of fishing on Galilee, that in hopelessness after the crucifixion he had returned to his old occupation.

It is remarkable how Bible students look for a failure on the part of Peter on every possible occasion. Peter did deny Jesus with oaths and curses, but after his restoration we find him bold almost to a fault on behalf of his Lord. As for Paul's condemnation of Peter in Galatians we must remember that we have only Paul's side of the story. It is still possible for men equally good to take a different attitude on matters of policy.

Although there were a number of appearances to small groups in and around Jerusalem the hostile atmosphere of the capital was no place for a manifestation to a group larger than the Eleven. In Matthew 26:32, Jesus had said, "After I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee." With this as their cue the disciples went back to their homes around the lake of Galilee. While waiting for the appearance of Jesus it seemed wise to utilize the time to the best advantage. Peter, as the leader of the group, said, "I go a-fishing." The others responded, "We come also with thee."

II. THE THIRD APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD

On the first Easter evening Jesus appeared to the entire group of disciples with the exception of Thomas. A week later he appeared to the disciples, Thomas being present. There were several manifestations to small groups, the women, the two disciples going to Emmaus and a special appearance to Peter. However, this meeting recorded by John is the third appearance to a larger group (seven) of the disciples.

We know nothing of this special

appearance to Peter except that it took place. Mark does not mention it. What was said between Peter and Jesus when they met for the first time since the denial was not for others to know. The penitence, forgiveness and joy of that meeting was locked forever in Peter's heart. That he was completely forgiven by Jesus we can be sure for we find Peter with the disciples when Jesus appeared for the first time to the group.

The disciples fished all night without luck. Toward dawn a figure was seen on the shore who hailed them and asked if they had caught anything—everyone is interested in fisherman's luck! Upon receiving a negative reply the voice from shore said, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat and ye shall find." Obeying the injunction they drew up the net full of fish. A scene of three years before flashed across John's memory. Quietly he said to Peter, "It is the Lord." Jumping into the shallow water Peter waded ashore. He had to be the first to get to Jesus.

On shore was a fire over which Jesus had been preparing fish. He now called his disciples to breakfast and passed them bread and fish. In his first appearance Jesus had eaten fish to convince them of the reality of his body, now he served them fish that he had cooked. Is there any wonder that the disciples believed whole-heartedly in the resurrection?

III. JESUS, PETER, AND THE DISCIPLES John 21:15-19

At the Last Supper Peter vehemently declared his loyalty and devotion to Jesus. Before the disciples Jesus had foretold the bitter three-fold denial. To prove his loyalty Peter defended Jesus with the sword in the garden. Peter's courage was real—as long as he had armies to face he could die valiantly, servant girls were another matter. Jesus saved the life of his would-be defender by healing Malchus.

In the confusion that followed all the disciples "forsook him and fled." After the initial wave of fear had carried them from the garden, Peter and John began to reflect upon their cowardice. Together they determined to make up in some measure for their flight by being present at the trial. Peter has been justly condemned for his denial but it should not be forgotten that the very denial grew out of his desire to be near Jesus. He was following Christ even if afar off, and that was more than nine of the other disciples were doing at this time. "It was brave and loyal for him to keep as near the Master as he could . . . but being the man he was the action was madness." And so came the denial.

After breakfast by the lake Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Simon, lovest thou me more than these?" recalling the boast of Peter, "Though all forsake thee yet will not I." Peter had

denied Jesus in public, in public he must give complete assurance of his loyalty. The word *agapas* used here by Jesus denotes high regard in distinction from warm personal affection. Peter replied, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Peter uses the term *philo* which denotes deep personal affection. Jesus then commanded Peter to feed his lambs.

The second time Jesus asked the question, "Simon, lovest thou me?" This time the qualifying phrase "more than these" was omitted. Peter replied in exactly the same words he had used before. Jesus commanded him in stronger terms, "Feed my sheep."

A third time Jesus put the question to Peter, "Simon, lovest (*phileis*) thou me?" This time Jesus used the term of deep personal affection. Peter grieved at the doubts that Jesus had expressed of his deep personal affection, responded with heart-breaking emphasis, "Lord, thou knowest (*oidas*) all things, thou knowest (*ginoskeis*) I love (*philo*) thee." This time Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

The exhortation was sufficient and it was never forgotten. Years later a truly humble old man recalls those glorious days of his blustering youth when he walked and talked with Jesus, as he writes, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Peter's restoration is complete. Now he learns that his devotion is to be rewarded by martyrdom, but there will be the same joy for him that there was for his Master. The soul of Peter is sound, he is worthy to suffer for his Lord.

In after years Peter proved his loyalty and love. Fearlessly he accused the Jews of taking Jesus and "by wicked hands have crucified and slain whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Here was the heart of Peter's message and faith. The resurrection had made a new man of him and no one knew it better than Peter himself. The death, resurrection and resulting forgiveness of sin to those that believe is central in all of Peter's recorded sermons in Acts. It is just as central in the two epistles that we have from him. All of Peter's messages and his two letters can be roughly divided under the four heads: (1) Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God. (2) He was crucified according to the Scripture. (3) His resurrection is the complete proof of his Messiahship. (4) There is redemption from sin for all who believe on him.

In all the subsequent history of the church the power of that message has never been equaled. Born out of a

soul that had been tried in the crucible of his own denial, inspired by the restoration granted him by a risen and a forgiving Lord, Peter preached with a fervor that was as fearless as it was moving. It is a message that still will save all who believe truly and love sincerely our Lord Jesus Christ.

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ If the appearances of Jesus to the disciples were only of a spiritual nature, how do you account for his eating fish they had prepared and their eating fish he had prepared?
- ¶ Was food necessary for his resurrection body?
- ¶ Did Peter do right to go fishing on the occasion of our lesson?
- ¶ Would Christ rather find his disciples idle or working?
- ¶ Psychologically is it possible to account for the change in Peter apart from the resurrection of Jesus?
- ¶ From the Christian standpoint which is more important "catching fish" or "feeding sheep"? Should we make such either/or distinctions?
- ¶ Do you think Peter ever lapsed into cowardice again?
- ¶ Could both Peter and Paul have been right in their attitude toward eating with Gentiles?

¶ As a matter of policy is it right or wrong to "make yourself all things to all men that you might save some of them"? Where do you have to draw the line?

Notes and Comments

Foakes-Jackson says of the apostle Peter: "If Saint Paul is one of the most interesting characters for a biographer an historian can select, it must not be forgotten that the church has always put first the more dimly seen figure of Peter. When the Acts of the Apostles records that the sick used to be brought into the streets that 'even the shadow of Peter passing by' might overshadow some of them, it is a figure of his subsequent influence on the Christian world, the history of which for countless generations was dominated everywhere by the 'shadow of Peter passing by.' The personality, writings and achievements of Paul have wrought much, and have given him substance as a figure in history; but he has not captured the imagination of mankind as fully as the mighty shadow of his great colleague. Of the religion of Christ it may be said that its outward manifestations in the world are its church and its theology; and the one is connected with the name of the apostle Peter, the other with that of the apostle Paul. Judged by this test, Peter is even of greater importance than Paul himself."

Teachers' Helps

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

PETER DECLARES HIS LOVE

Are you a baseball "fan"? Do you know Gabby Hartnett? Well, Gabby hit a home run yesterday (September 28) in the game with the Pittsburgh Pirates. It was the ninth inning, last half, two men down, two strikes on Gabby. The score was a tie. A Chicago victory would put the Cubs half a game ahead in the thrilling race for first place in the National League. The Chicago Cubs' manager "socked the pill" over the fence, and the game was at an end. I am relating this in order to quote the remark made by Mr. Hartnett to newspaper men after the affair. Said he: "It was the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me."

Hartnett has a reputation for taciturnity and reserve, and that is why he is nicknamed "Gabby." I can understand how a great emotion would possess the man under circumstances like those just cited. I can appreciate the thrill a spectator would get out of a game like that (I wish I had been there). It reveals a narrowness of vision and too much enthrallment in the business of baseball,

however, to have a man say of even a home run, "It was the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me."

Our likes and dislikes, our hobbies and passions and predilections make up life. Love of sport, deep interest in the job, devotion to necessary routine—these are fine. Vim, vigor, verve and vivacity are a great group of v's. Above and around all the machinery and mechanism of money-making and pleasure, there should be the very appreciable influence of a definite, outright commitment to our God. The most wonderful thing that ever happened to Peter—what do you think it was? Surely it was not the big haul of fish so that the nets almost broke. Probably it was the transfiguration experience. Happy is the man who has had an uplifting, stimulating, spiritual experience, so good and wholesome that its memory and influence will always be with him and to which he can refer as one of life's greatest moments.

What do you like? Are you one of those pauperized minds dependent upon two or three movies a week? Is a game of indifferent bridge your chief intellectual outlet? Have your golf and your God changed capital letters? Do you start with your faith and let other considerations arrange themselves in impos-

ant but subordinate places, or do you patronizingly let a little religion look in low and then (provided of course it is not too irritating) upon your office and playground? You know for yourself and I know for myself. I think we both will agree that it would be psychologically healthy to pause long enough to consider Peter's unleashed declaration of love for his Master in terms of our own devotion. Too many men depend, like rabby, upon a home run; or upon a par core; or maybe the ticker. We all need spiritual renovation.

The disciples were in a state of emotional disturbance. The crucified, risen Lord had appeared. Nobody knew what was to happen. Six or seven of the disciples were sitting around in agitated helplessness. "You fellows do what you please," said Peter, who was always starting something, "as for me, I'm going fishing." "Good idea," said the others, "we'll go with you."

This happened at night. Read the account again and notice that something of importance happened at daybreak. Let us say in passing that faith counsels us to remember that dawn often brings good. You have noticed of course that Peter sprang into the water and went hurriedly to the side of Jesus. The others followed in the boat, dragging the fish along with them. If a game warden had come along just then, he would have learned that they had one hundred and fifty-three big ones. To Peter, the one risen Lord was of much more account than the many evidences of material gain. It was a strange breakfast there in the early morning at the shore of the lake. They "knew" the uninvited guest who became their host was the Master, but not one of them dared ask him. Now follows the dialogue between Jesus and Peter. Peter's feelings were hurt. Of course I love you. You know I love you. "Then feed my sheep."

Hence the Golden Text for the day: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." We read in Proverbs 13:2, "When the desire cometh, it is the love of life." Peter was filled with the love of faith. I am convinced that we need more abandon in our Christian life—not the abandon of emotional irresponsibility, but the sincere declaration of Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, you knowest that I love thee."

As followers of Jesus, we need to be less non-committal, more positive, thorough, earnest, determined, forthright. We need much more than the negative commendation of President Lincoln for a dubious invention:

"For the sort of people who want this sort of thing, this is the sort of thing that sort of people will want."

We love our Lord. Let us be positive. Let us address ourselves to keeping his commandments.

Peter teaches. The trouble is he interests us so much that we miss the lessons of his very human, rather spotted life.

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

PETER DECLARES HIS LOVE— PROVING OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST

As this is being written the word "plebiscite" is often seen and heard. Americans understand the meaning of "referendum" better. Both mean a vote of the people on some measure submitted to them by some person having the initiative, or right to ask them to make that choice. In Europe these plebiscites are times of real heart-searchings. Individuals and nations are deciding destiny not only for themselves but for those who come after them. Many times it means separation from their homes. It means moving to a strange land. Almost always it means quite a different form of government from what they have been accustomed. They must make a choice.

In a sense we are always making these choices, deciding things. This occasion in the early morning sunshine by that lakeside was a great plebiscite for those seven disciples of Jesus, especially for Peter in whom we are most concerned in this lesson. We might call it a "Plebiscite of Life's Alternatives."

We have read these words so often that the full meaning has been lost because of familiarity. Peter was a fisherman. It was born in him to love the associations of the fisher villages, the boats, nets, the thrill of the uncertainty of fisherman's luck. He and others had left their nets to follow Jesus, but after the cause seemed lost they went back to fishing again (John 21:3). It is hard to imagine a greater challenge than that Jesus makes to Peter, "If you love me as you say you do, become a shepherd." Probably this was the greatest contrast of that time. The change suggests exchanging the cool night or early morning work on Galilee for the hot daytime employment for Palestinian hillsides. It suggests the constant appeal of the need of the helpless. The continuous dependence of those who cannot care for themselves. Fish can take care of themselves. Lambs and sheep cannot. Peter made his choice. How well he fulfilled the office of shepherd we shall learn in the lessons for next month.

Proving our love for Jesus does not always involve a complete change of employment. Only a few are asked to become full-time workers. However there is a sense in which we must constantly make a similar choice. Loving Christ means loving him more than others do who make their means of earning a living the most important thing in life. It sometimes means less personal comfort. A reporter in a local paper recently gave his opinion of the ideal way to spend Sunday as a day of rest. Eating, sleeping, light reading, smoking, lazy lounging occupied most of the requirements. The claims of the church or any uplifting organization were not mentioned.

Loving Christ as Peter was challenged

to do also means thinking of others first. It means centering our attention on people rather than on things, loving them, putting up with their peculiarities and weaknesses. In short, the whole question of the stewardship of life is included. Peter was being asked to change not only his manner of spending his time and means of earning a living, but his whole outlook on life. Christ makes that same demand today. How well are we meeting it? Are we trying like Peter to find out what others are expected to do and thus meriting the rebuke of the twenty-second verse of this chapter? Are we really loving Christ more than others do who go their own way? Christ has the right to ask us to make the choice. When the plebiscite votes are counted up what will the church's answer be?

The Lesson Illustrated

JESUS, SUPREME EXAMPLE OF LOVE WINNING

He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.

—Edwin Markham.

HE'S MY BROTHER

Do you remember the incident in connection with the little Scotch lassie? She was trudging along carrying a boy almost as large as herself. Someone remarked to her about how heavy her load must be. Instantly she replied, "He's nae heavy. He's mi brither."

It was not hard for Peter to be brave after the resurrection, for he loved the Lord Jesus Christ with all of his heart and by his death and resurrection recognized that Jesus was now his elder brother. Peter's attitude shows how much he loved and revered Jesus and the bond of brotherhood.

"HIS FACE DID SHINE"

A Japanese lady visited a missionary boarding-school one day and said to the missionary, "Tell me, does your principal take only pretty girls?" "Oh, no, indeed, she takes all girls." "But there is a different look on the faces of these girls from that seen on most Japanese girls." "That is because we cultivate the soul here," answered the gentle-voiced teacher. "Well, I'm not a Christian," said the Japanese woman; "I don't want to be, and I don't want my daughter to be a Christian—but I'd like to get that look on her face."

ANXIETIES OF PASTORAL CARE

Saint Francis, reflecting on a story he heard of a mountaineer in the Alps, who had risked his life to save a sheep, says: "Oh, God, if such was the earnestness of this shepherd in seeking for a mean animal, which had probably been frozen on the glacier, how is it that I am so indifferent in seeking my sheep?"

A Worship Service Program

Prepared as a Suggestion by NEWTON H. CARMAN

PRELUDE. Quiet music, while the classes take their places. Pianist plays introduction or chord for opening hymn, the school standing at signal, and remaining standing through the—

OPENING HYMN. "When Morning Gilds the Skies" (one verse). This should be memorized. ("Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart" is also appropriate.)

CALL TO WORSHIP

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
I will commune with God in his holy place.
I will go down into the valleys of service with Christ.

HYMN. "I Would Be True," suggested. School is then seated.

THE WORSHIP STORY.

First Sunday. A foreglimpse of the quarter's study.

Succeeding Sunday. A brief summary passage of the lesson for the day can be used, read by pupil, and using Bible picture, if possible.

Closing Sunday. Summary of the quarter's study.

PRAYER (by pastor or trusted leader) suited to the lesson theme. (School stands for this prayer and through "Prayer in Unison.")

HYMN. Appropriate to the theme of the day.

PRAYER (in unison). Impress us with thy love and power, O our God, that in the spirit of thy Christ, our Saviour, we may study, and work, and play. Amen.

MUSIC, while school passes to classes in orderly fashion.

CLASS SESSIONS.

MUSIC, while school returns from classes to their seats.

NECESSARY ANNOUNCEMENTS. Bulletin-boards should be used as much as possible, as excessive "announcing" detracts from the spirit of worship.

WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING.

School Stands and Sings, "I Give Thee but Thine Own," or "I Gave My Life for Thee," while a representative from each class brings forward the offering of his class. They stand quietly before table on which offering has been placed, while the school offers its

Prayer of Gratitude: "Our Father in heaven, Jesus has taught us that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that thou dost love a cheerful giver. We thank thee that we may share in the blessedness of giving. And we pray that as thou art the great and loving giver of good gifts to thy children, so we may share thy divine generosity in giving to others. Accept and use these gifts of our hearts, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

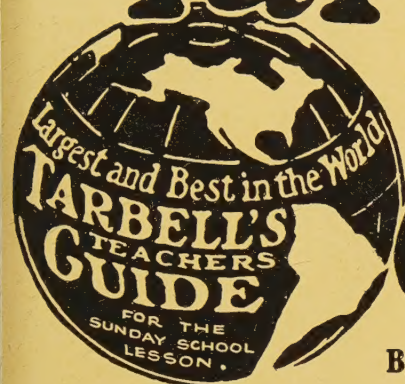
HYMN. School standing through "Closing Hymn."

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION AND INTERCESSION. A class, to which it has been assigned in advance, offers a brief, pointed prayer, growing out of the experience of the worship and the class session.

CLOSING HYMN OF PERSONAL DEDICATION. "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee," or "O Jesus, I Have Promised." (Sing reverently and quietly, as a closing prayer.)

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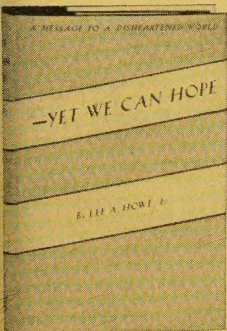
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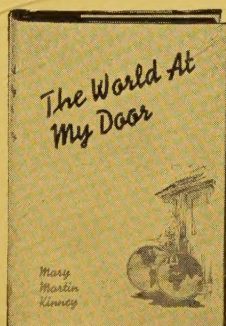
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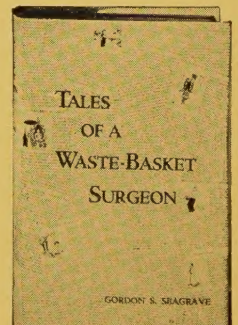


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